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1925-✓

Idealism and Foreign Policy.

A Study of the Relations of Great Britain with
Germany and France, 1860-1878.

"But he's coming along very slowly---and what
curious attitudes he goes into!" said Alice.

"Not at all," said the King, "He's an Anglo-Saxon
Messenger, and these are Anglo-Saxon Attitudes."
("Alice Through the Looking-Glass.")

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John ... W

I.

I

suppl. 1830-1840

Sir Robert Morier, in one of his letters, discusses a certain factor in English politics: the existence of what he calls "the overlapping generation." By this he means, the continued influence in any age of statesmen who in training and character belong to the previous one. This is a fact which may be noticed in any line of life; but a specially striking example is found in politics at the opening of the century in which Morier lived: so that the thoughts and manners, the "Zeit-Geist" of that period to which is given the name "18th Century" are carried far into the 19th Century, ~~in politics~~ and this notwithstanding the tremendous changes which had taken place in the economic and artistic life of the nation. We find a continuity in politics which does not exist in the other branches of civilisation. It is strange to picture an interview between Sir Roger de Coverley and Mr Gradgrind; between Pope or Johnson and Keats; but Wellington and Canning would have met, with instant recognition and on equal terms, Walpole and Carteret.

The political decease of the 18th Century took place between the years 1830 and 1840. Two dates might be selected as marking its close: the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832; or the accession of Queen Victoria/

1) Morier, L.p. 402.

Victoria in 1837. Both are more or less inaccurate, yet both could be named with truth; for each introduced and symbolised a great change which overtook the course of British policy. They symbolised the entrance into politics, the one of the mentality, the other of the morality, of the English middle class. Such is the usual explanation: it is perhaps insufficient, but may serve its turn.

The fact of the change is undeniable. By 1840 the student is uneasily conscious of it: as one who sniffs and sniffs suspiciously before deciding that the gas is escaping. By 1850 it is plain to all. We have passed from the age of facts, to the age of ideas; from the rule of opportunism in politics, to the rule of principle. We are no longer dealing with men who are guided by the necessities of the hour, or by the wisdom of experience; but with men guided by abstract ideas of the Right and the Best, and who at any moment are liable to find the power of these ideas overrule the practical considerations of the moment.

The men of the 18th century prided themselves on being the children of the age of reason. They were not altogether insensible to the influence of great ideas; but they had none of the spirit of the fanatic, that rides triumphant over the logic of events. They modified their policies, and changed their coats according as the wind blew. What ideals they had they apprehended crudely, somewhat like a child. Their literature, with its pointed wit, its polished and elegant/

elegant expression, its musty and materialistic personifications, typified their minds. They were not without their magnificence, but it was a formal and chilly grandeur. The precise and solemn harmonies of Latin pleased their minds, rather than the stormy and irregular splendour of Elizabethan verse. They were extraordinarily sensitive to the effects of oratory for the time being, and their parliamentary debates were titanic combats, but they had little real effect: we hear of Henry Fox blushing and shuddering under the invective of Pitt, but we do not hear that he went out and hanged himself afterwards; nor even that the Treasury was a penny the better. Their speech was divorced from action. Their speakers talked magnificent prose; but the great men who transformed England in the reigns of Elizabeth and James did not talk prose at all, but poetry. The phrases that sprang naturally to the lips of Strickland, Eliot, the Wentworths, were of the same essence as those we hear from the heroes of Shakespeare and Webster. In those days, feeling and action had been welded into one indissoluble whole; in the 18th century, we have action dissevered from principle, united to a superficial emotionalism; and in the Victorian age we leave both these phases behind: we are in a time when both moral and political ideas were formulated as principles, and governed the action of the national leaders.

The 18th century statesman, when faced with a crisis decided/

decided his course upon the point of expediency. It might be a merely selfish expediency - what can I gain by it? or it might be of a higher quality - what can the country gain by it? But the 19th century statesman, in the same position, at once brought the problem to the test of certain preconceived ideas. Will such a course be consistent with national, or liberal, or free trade, principles? or - Will it break away from our traditional policy of defending Constantinople? And he decided his action from such a point of view, instead of estimating the question upon its own merits.

This tendency was noticeable in those statesmen who belonged to "the overlapping generation", as well as in those who were the true children of the 19th century. Palmerston, a real veteran of the old days, and Russell, who, though younger, had still spent the formative years of his youth largely under 18th century influences, both came under its power: but whereas Russell found himself at once in a congenial atmosphere, and was, ^{indeed} in fact, a spiritual Victorian, Palmerston was never quite acclimatised, but only adopted some of its qualities, like the savage who obtains a silk hat and wears it with fondest pride. On the other hand, the younger generation offered examples of men who had more the temper of the opportunist than of the idealist. Such was Disraeli: but Disraeli was not an Englishman.

This/

This spirit, then, was not introduced into political life by the example of certain important leaders: it was the result of influences of the most general and indefinable kind.

10 The times made the men, not the men the times.

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It is impossible to avoid paying honour to the men¹⁰ of the Victorian age. With all the faults and follies that may attend it, idealism is in itself a quality which claims the respect of humanity; and these men, more or less in each case, were idealists. Amazement overtakes the young student of to-day. Contemporary writings have taught him to expect ~~a~~ a crowd of hoary and selfish hypocrites playing their own games with the destinies of human beings. He finds, instead, men conscientious, sincere, devoted even: having each his own enthusiasms which override his self-interest: striving, however imperfectly, to give expression to the things that seem¹¹ to them best. And he asks, in confusion: to what did all this labour lead? Was it only to the disaster which has overtaken us, and for which we blamed them? Here is some good: why has only evil resulted?

We recall the wisdom of our ancestors: the way to Hell is paved with good intentions. Truth is relative and an idea that has in it something not wholly true, if elevated into a universal law, may lead to destruction.

In/

In this lay the inherent weakness of Victorian idealism. No attempt was made¹² to bring it into relation with fact, or to correct it by experience. There was no understanding that all the rules of policy are only relatively true they were given an absolute value.

Before going on to analyse this idealism, its nature and individual manifestations, it is necessary to examine its sources, and to try to find the reason of its universal domination in Victorian political circles, and even to a great extent among the whole nation.

Let us first make clear what is here meant by the term, Victorian idealism. It consisted of two distinct characteristics, not necessarily connected. It implied a definite attempt to guide the conduct by reference to certain moral and intellectual principles. It also implied a preoccupation with ideas as distinct from facts, and an inability or disinclination to test the value of these ideas by a careful comparison with real and material conditions.

The absolute rule of principle is not possible over a mind of an inquisitive and critical turn, accustomed to clear and accurate thinking. A man of this latter temper will not be content to accept any idea without examining it. He will be continually revising his opinions. He will be inclined to test every principle by considering it in operation, and, finding grave differences in many possible cases, will come to/

to the conclusion that no principle can be equally applicable to all times and circumstances, but that each should be modified by the test of necessity. Principle should be the guide, ~~but~~ not the tyrant, of his action. The characteristic of Victorian idealism, however, was that its principles were considered universal. They were to be applied in all cases, otherwise the statesman laid himself open to the accusation of inconsistency.

del. (Consistency is rather a deadly virtue in a statesman since it implies that he is either obstinate, or lacking in adaptability, or not open to new ideas: but it was admired by the Victorians.)

Accordingly, we find that clear thinking was very rare at this time. The tendency of the uneducated man is to ¹⁵ adopt an idea on insufficient grounds, without thinking it out for himself, and then to cling to it tenaciously for the rest of his life: but at this time this tendency was as noticeable in the best-trained minds in political life as in those of the vulgar. "We cling to the shred of an old policy after it has been torn to pieces", exclaimed Salisbury in despair.²⁾* In the same way they clung painfully to the political principles once/

(2)* To Lord Lytton 25.5.1877. Salisbury, Vol. II, p.195.

once received into their minds. Deprived of the guidance of these principles, they were bewildered, and knew not what to do. They were unable to see clearly what must be the result of any given action, and therefore, when left to their own judgment, could not decide on any definite course. The "drift" policy which led to the Crimean War is perhaps the most striking example of this. It is probably no exaggeration to say, that with the exception of Salisbury, Dilke, and possibly Disraeli, no British minister between 1830 and 1890 ever sat down to think out clearly for himself, putting aside tradition and precept, a definite policy in foreign affairs.

One great cause which contributed to make this state of mind general in England was the isolated and insular position of the country. It was a merely intellectual isolation: materially and politically, it had ceased to exist since the Industrial Revolution and the great developement of the British Empire. "England, which has more neighbours and a larger land-boundary than any nation ever had before, has convinced herself that she lives alone on a little island whose parochial concerns are all in all to her, and turns away with contempt and disgust from the affairs of a world in which she had ten times the stake of any other nation." ³⁾ ~~(This is a phase which has occurred periodically in the history of England: but it now appeared in an extreme form, and at a moment when England, owing to the growth of intercommunication, and the fact that she had become the political centre of a great/~~

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del.
 19 ~~great British Empire, was far more closely connected with her~~
~~neighbours than she had ever been before.~~ The political re-
 sults of this will be discussed hereafter; at present it is
 only necessary to draw attention to its effect on Victorian
 mentality. By deliberately withdrawing from the political
 interests of their neighbours, the English people were to a
 great extent living in a realm of illusion. Not only did they
 stand apart from certain developments of the highest import-
 ance, but - a far more serious danger - they cut themselves
 off from all outside criticism and free interchange of thought.
 Just as an only child, brought up at home without companions,

20 may become conceited, self-opinionated, and regardless of
 3. others, the Englishman, exempt from the criticism of other
 nations and ⁽³⁾ from the necessity of showing some deference to
 their wishes and attention to their progress, developed these
 qualities. It was the danger to which his position had long
 exposed him. The smaller nations of the British Isles had
 always had this very natural development checked by the threat-
 ening presence of a neighbour more powerful than themselves;
 but it was easy for the Englishman to forget the existence of
 Scotland and Wales, and to despise Ireland. These circum-
 21. stances produced a contempt of foreign nations, a conscious
 superiority and self-confidence, which the foreigner found ex-
 cessively irritating, and which ended in the Englishman living
 in/

in a sort of Fool's Paradise of his own, quite regardless of the light in which he and his country appeared to other eyes.

Outside criticism more than anything else stirs up the individual to analyse his thoughts and examine the real value of his opinions: and the lack of it was one cause of the stagnation of the political mind in England.

One is struck by the futility of many of these ideal-²¹
²²ists, and the obstinacy with which^N they clung to their ideas. They never saw that by sometimes sacrificing their principles, they could gain more in the end. They were incapable of distinguishing the real from the superficial tendencies of the course of events - the backwater from the main flood of the stream. Was there a weakness in the men themselves that had been absent in their ancestors? Such a weakness might have been a result of the exhaustion of the nation after the frightful political and economic crisis through which it had passed between 1790 and 1820, but a more immediate cause was²²
²³ the change introduced into politics by The Reform^N Bill of 1832

The circumstances which had attended the passing of the Great Reform Bill had resulted in the confusion of several distinct political ideas in the popular mind, and even in the minds of the politicians themselves.

The Reform Bill in itself was not inconsistent with the/

the constitutional theories of the 18th century, or with the principles of either of the great parties, the Whigs and the Tories. It made no essential alteration in the nature of the constitution. It drew its leading supporters from the ranks of the orthodox, ^{and} they could easily defend their position. ²³ They could say that they were abolishing the accidental perversions produced by time and neglect, to restore the constitution to its natural balance: they could say that the constitution had been based upon the tenure of land, at a time when the whole life of the nation was based on land-tenure, and that now when the basis of that national life had widened, and rested upon personal, and no longer upon real wealth, the basis of the constitution should be widened with it. Both ²⁴ these arguments were true. It was not in the Bill itself, but ²⁵ in the means which were adopted to secure its passage, that the seeds of revolution lay. Its advocates in the ranks of the aristocracy deliberately sought the support of their political adversaries. They allied themselves with the Radicals. They put on Radical colours, and fought their fight with Radical weapons. It was ~~thus~~ that they obtained the popular support which gave them the victory. The Bill was not democratic: it was not 'popular', it was not even Liberal: but it was represented to the thinking workman as being all these things, and as such it received his support.

²⁶ The Whig supporters of the Bill intended to break off ²⁵ this/

this alliance whenever it had served its turn, discard the Radicals and their principles, and preserve unblemished in the future the old aristocratic system of the past: but they could not unravel the web themselves had woven. No, not though they would move no further; not though Demos, disenchanted, turned to revolution and socialism for the help which parliament failed to give. They had thrown dust in the people's eyes - and in their own. They had, for a temporary advantage, deliberately 26. confounded two things that were as far apart as the poles, and 27. they paid the penalty in that inextricable confusion of party and policy that has lasted ever since. They had struck a bargain with their master-fiend, and he held them to the letter of it. The great stars of the Pleiad, that a child might think to hold in his hand, are suns a million miles apart: and so to the earthbound gaze of the man in the street, Liberty, Progress Democracy, ideals as little connected as these, were gathered together in one indis severable constellation, and this confusion, attached to some of the most important and universal 28. political conceptions, tended naturally to spread over every 27. part of the field of politics.

The Reform Act had another effect, which was already felt by 1860, and which was doubled by Disraeli's Reform Act of 1867. Politicians had now to appeal to a much wider audience, an audience less cultivated, and untrained in correct habits of thought. The politician could not address to a monster meeting of the working and lower middle classes the speech which might be successful with/

with a small company of men educated at the great universities of the world. Politicians realised this: indeed, it is probable that they over-estimated the change. They began deliberately to talk down to the level of their audience, instead of making efforts to raise that audience to a higher intellectual plane. The popular meetings which they addressed were made up of men who did not want lucid thought, carefully-weighted conclusions, judgment, impartiality: they wanted something familiar, yet stirring; they wanted to hear their own vague ideas given back to them from the platform dressed in fine-sounding words. They did not want new ideas, for they distrusted anything new, adopting the defensive attitude natural to mankind when confronted with the unknown. What they really liked were simple but picturesque phrases - catch-words, which they could remember and repeat, solemnly and emphatically, without analysing their meaning. They wanted speeches that sounded well, but did not make too great a demand on the brain-power of the hearer.

④ "There is no science in which the wholesome ordeal of definition is more needed than in politics. The man who can discover a phrase by which the desired argument or assertion is hinted, without being formally laid down, does far more for this cause than the keenest reasoner".

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④) Salisbury, ~~Life~~. Vol.I.p.155.

31 In addition to this, public speaking to a large audi-
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 ence encouraged ambiguity of expression. The ignorant elector
 demanded a more rigid consistency, was less able to understand
 change and variety. No orator dared to go too far, to commit
 himself too deeply to any statement or policy, for, whether
 made in the Commons or on an election tour, his speeches would
 be reported, and afterwards cast in his teeth if he acted in-
 consistently. Yet the stolid and conscientious working-class
 heckler demanded promises: so it was necessary for the speaker
 to express himself in terms which he could afterwards explain
 32 away. They soon became remarkably efficient at this task. ^{31.} Mr
 Gladstone in particular raised it to the level of a fine art,
 so that in time his most impressive orations, when dissected,
 could be construed as meaning almost anything that the inter-
 preter wished, like the predictions of the Minor Prophets.
 This habit might be cultivated until it became second nature,
 and the victim habitually expressed himself as obscurely as the
 Delphic Oracle. The mode of expression reacted on that of
 conception, and thought became as confused as speech.

The nation was not unconscious of its own characteristics.
 It was ³²indeed rather proud of its incapacity for clear, coherent
 33 thinking, and regarded this as one of the solid virtues of the
 English race. This was the practical good sense that had made
 England the most progressive country in the world; mere theor-
 ising was waste of time, and might be left to other and less
 efficient peoples.

"Art is long and life is short," said an important daily paper complacently, "For the most part we settle things first and understand them afterwards. Let us have as few theories as possible; what is wanted is not the light of speculation. If nothing worked well of which the theory was [✓]not perfectly ³³ understood, we should be in sad confusion. The relations of labour and capital, we are told, are not understood, ⁵⁾ yet trade and commerce, on the whole, work satisfactorily."

(So the dyer continued to mix his dyes by guesswork, and the politician to settle the affairs of Europe without consulting an atlas or a history-book.

del. ~~(Another important influence of the day was partly the result, and partly the cause, of the general carelessness and looseness in thought and expression.~~

~~The tendency of English Literature, except in the 18th century, has been perhaps more towards beauty of form, luxuriance of/~~

⁵⁾ The "Times", quoted by Matthew Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy."

del. The vagueness of conception and looseness of expression in some of these German scholars infected English students also, some of whom were whole-hearted admirers enough to think them an essential part of German genius, and actually strive to cultivate them; while the lucidity and precision of the French language were labelled 'superficial'.

38. This incapability of distinguishing the chaff from the grain - this imitation of the faults of German literature as well as its virtues, shows a weakness already present in the minds of the English critics; but it was increased by these influences.

Strong emotions and passionate feeling cannot be ruled by political principles. The man who is deeply moved by the sight of suffering, or highly sensitive on the point of honour, will not be restrained from action in such cases, because action is contrary to ^{the} ~~no~~ principles of constitutional government or free trade. Accordingly, the Victorians were not an emotional people; they were highly sentimental - they did not feel deeply, but superficially, and easily relieved their minds by talking. This sentimentality tinged all their literature, art, and morality, producing that distinctive character generally referred to as 'Early Victorian'. It was a sentimentality of the most vicious sort, for it was sentimental optimism. It deliberately turned away from the sight of evil, blinded itself to the truth whenever the truth was unpleasant, and "thus to interpose a little ease, let (its) frail/

frail thoughts dally^v with false surmise." It is in this connection that its effects must be noted here. The English, owing to the insular conditions already described, have always had a great capacity for self-deception, but this was never so great and so general¹⁴⁰ as in the Victorian Age. This people, living still in the débris of a vast industrial upheaval, surrounded by poverty, disease, ugliness, which can rarely have been equalled, and with a "submerged population" of greater proportions than had ever been seen before in England, were never tired of **talking** of progress and civilisation and the great strides^v that the nation had made. ¹³⁶

"There is no one to blame for this," said the "Times," describing the misery of the East End of London in times of slack trade, "It is the result of Nature's simplest laws." ¹³⁷

¹⁴¹ This smug^v satisfaction was fed by the Darwinian Theory, in the form in which it was apprehended by the majority. "Evolution" was taken to mean a continuous and inevitable evolution upwards, which had been working since the beginning of time, and was now at its highest speed. A scientific justification was thus given to^v literary and popular optimism. The spirit even of the greatest literature of the time reflected it: on the one hand in the superficial philosophy and sleek moralisings of Tennyson, on the other in the robust and importunate cheerfulness of Browning. The Victorians had no regard for culture other than their own: the railway, the telegraph, the replacement of the handicraft by the machine, were to them the true tokens of civilisation. Progress was estimated in terms of speed, and "better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay," was their watchword, as they

¹⁴² Quoted Matthew Arnold, "Culture and Anarchy."

watchword, as they broke open the seclusion of the Chinese Empire and forced upon the reluctant³⁸ heathen the rifle and the opium traffic. Few voices were raised in criticism, save in terms complimentary. Even those who devoted their lives to the removal of abuses, were inclined to look upon the evils⁴³ which they attacked as accidental and temporary, and made little attempt to diagnose the organic diseases which had produced them.

In spite of its busy optimism, there was no such vitality in the nation as had been in the great ages of imperial expansion or national consolidation. Those who did not share this persistent hope and confidence, who thought they saw present weaknesses³⁹ and dangers, whether moral or political, seemed to be overtaken with a sort of despair. They felt it was hopeless to try to awaken their countrymen, and they accepted the inevitable with a fatal resignation. They fled to solitude, not in the spirit of Elijah, but in that of Timon. Their remonstrances, if any, were addressed only to the select few - to the righteous, not to the unrepentant sinners. Some accepted⁵ the rules imposed upon them, and worked without hope; some turned their backs, seeking consolation in the past. Arnold's 'Grande Chartreuse' expressed perfectly this 'mild despair' in the intellectual world:⁴⁰

Wanderers
 "We stand between two worlds, one dead,
 The other powerless to be born" . . .

In the political world, we find the parallel case of Salisbury who/

who accepted the standards of his contemporaries, and paid the penalty of acquiescence in the gradual loss of his keen vision and sterilisation of his powers. In politics there was no one who combined the moral force to stand apart from the contagious weakness of the age, with the ability to make their influence felt. In literature matters were little better. Carlyle's gospel of power, with its invalid's worship of material strength, could have little healing virtue: the satire of Dickens and the indignation of Elizabeth Barrett were turned against individual abuses, for both had the instinct of the practical worker not of the prophet. The most original minds of the age, the Brontë sisters, were devoted to the purest creative art, and in no single point came in contact with the life of their times.

To these causes which produced the reign of ideas - isolation; confusion of thought; the lowering of the intellectual standard by the advent of democracy; deliberate self-deception and moral weakness; - must be added yet one other.

Apart from this intellectual idealism, we must not forget the moral idealism of such men as Bright, Cobden, and Gladstone. These men were not free from some or all of the qualities already analysed, but they were, in addition to this men acting under a definite moral impulse. In this they were representative of a large part of the nation, and they introduced a new element into English politics, one which had not

(9) Cobden was a possible exception, as is pointed out later.

been there since the days of Cromwell and Pym. They were men whose political life was, to some extent, at least, **guided** by their religious feelings. On certain points they displayed the spirit of the fanatic, who will have no compromise, but all or nothing. 43

miss a line here. 7 No study that pretends to give an **account of opinion** and policy in England during the Victorian period can ignore what was, perhaps, a greater force in the national life than any party of any individual leader, --- the daily paper known as The "Times," and the man who, from 1840 to 1877, was its editor---John Thadeus Delane. 42

The position held by the "Times," both at home and abroad, was unique. It was undermined by the repeal of the newspaper stamp duty, through which, in time, a crowd of more or less dangerous rivals sprang up. Even before its great editor died, its glory was dimmed; it was no more than the "Queen Moon" with its "crowd of starry fays" about it: but even then its influence was still tremendous. The 44 most independent of Prime Ministers liked to be on good terms with Mr Delane; it was easier to disregard the Queen.

Part of the importance attached to the "Times" abroad was due to the fact that foreigners universally believed the great paper to be the official organ of the British government. Ministers frequently found their tasks rendered doubly difficult by some outspoken leader which had given offence to some continental government or people. At home, however, the influence of the paper was not due to any such

8) Cobden calculated that before the repeal ⁴ 5 of the whole daily press issued from the "Times" office. 45

superstition. It held its supremacy through its old-established position, lack of competition from rivals with the same resources as itself, and the extraordinary efficiency and enterprise of its management. It was the pioneer in all modern methods of reporting; it was always first in the field, and almost always reliable. It did not express the feeling of the country so much as it created and directed that feeling.

"The 'Times'," wrote Mr Ellice in a report prepared for Lord John Russell in 1855, "Has become omnipotent." ⁴⁶
 -9)

Before Delane became editor, the power of the "Times" was very great. In 1834 Wellington's temporary government was driven to make a definite written agreement on policy to obtain the support of the paper. ¹⁰ But the new editor, who took up his duties at the age of twenty-three, soon made its influence much greater. Twice a Prime Minister was constrained to beg as a favour the modification of the editorial tone, which was endangering our relations with foreign states. In 1852, Lord Aberdeen wrote to the editor, "I may ⁴⁷ almost say that the question of peace and war is in your hands."

(A mutual friend asserted that Granville owed his position to Delane's backing.) ⁸ More than once the too-well-informed paper damaged national interests. In 1854 the British ultimatum to Russia was read by the Tsar in the "Times"

~~Dasent's Delane. p. 296~~ ~~Cook's Delane. p. 5~~ ~~Lord Torrington. See~~
~~Dasent, II, p. 157.~~
 9) Cook's Delane, p. 296. 10) Ib. p. 5.

before the despatch containing it arrived in St Petersburg, which naturally did not make that potentate's mood more conciliatory. Before this the paper had created bad feeling between the two governments by publishing Russia's secret proposals (January 1853) for the partition of Turkey. During the war the Russian army repeatedly obtained military information from the "Times".

In 1858, the publication¹ in the paper of Ellenborough's 48. despatch censuring Canning's Oude confiscation measures nearly cost the country the services of one of its most able administrators.

During the American Civil War, it was said that the 43 articles in^v the "Times" caused more bitterness of feeling in America, and made more mischief between the two countries, than all the blunders and hostility of the government. 11)

del.
6. "Last time I saw (President Lincoln)," wrote Dr Russell, the correspondent, to Delane, "He said to me, 'The "Times" is the most powerful thing in the world except perhaps the Mississippi'; and he of course feels sore if it be turned against him."

⑥ [Delane was on times of intimacy with most of the chief ministers who were contemporary with him. On first becoming editor he formed a close connection with Lord Aberdeen, 54 which lasted till the latter's death. Clarendon and Granville¹²⁾ were his constant correspondents, and the second 49. sometimes made confidences to him that may be termed indiscreet. Gladstone disliked him, but allowed Granville to act

11) See Cook's Delane, p. 94.

12) Torington believed that Granville owed his position to Delane. Darnley's Delane II, p. 157.

13/

as intermediary. John Russell hated him, but several times was obliged to seek his alliance. Palmerston, after a period of disagreement, was his close ally. Derby attacked him for publishing secret information, on more than one occasion, but when in office followed the general rule.

The man who wielded so much influence was not, save in his own particular line, one of great ability. In the management of his paper, his efficiency and enterprise were ⁵⁰ amazing. As a guide of public opinion, he was untrustworthy. He subordinated national interests to those of his paper and to his personal feelings; he frequently misinterpreted foreign events, and he was blind to some of the most significant elements in home affairs. The "Times" never struck out new lines, never was ahead of the age, ^{through} Sometimes on doubtful questions it hedged cleverly, but it usually took the wrong side, until the right triumphed. It was sneeringly neutral on the Free Trade Question, until Peel decided [✓] to repeal the Corn Laws, after which Gladstone himself was less fanatically opposed to Protection. It was thoroughly Austrian, until after Magenta and Solferino. During the war in America, it supported the South, until the final victory of the North. It was at first extremely hostile to Prussia/,

del. 13/ "I was aware that Mr Delane was very angry that I did not ask to kiss his hand instead of the Queen's when I was appointed to succeed Palmerston; but I would rather not be in office than hold it under such humiliating conditions." (Russell, 1866. Clarendon II 313.)

del. % egg. it was one of the most ardent opponents of the commercial treaty system, as being a compromise with Protection

It, in fact, embodied in ~~itself~~ the insular outlook, the blind self-satisfaction, the superficial judgments, the crude and insincere methods of thought, the conventionality and sentimentality, the lack of imagination and foresight, and the ignorance[✓] 51 and contempt of all foreigners, which were the worst characteristics of the Victorian age.

It was in foreign politics, as was natural, ---where the representatives of Britain came into contact with men of other nations and other methods, ---that the weakness of Victorian idealism was most clearly seen.

Between the years 1860 and 1878, ~~there~~ idealists was brought into relations with the greatest practical genius of the age in politics: the archetype of the opportunist. It is interesting to see how they fared, and how their idealism guided them through the troubled waters of the time. Safely, it would seem? Britain⁵² was rich, powerful, and at peace, and the end of the period saw her empire strengthened and enlarged. But is there not something more than wealth, power, and peace, to be considered? And can the disasters which fell upon the world later be in any traced to the effects to the Victorian policy during this time?

Before entering upon this subject, however, it is necessary to give some account of the chief of these ideas which directed the conduct of the Victorian statesmen.

Chap. I, Section (2)

II

These ideas may be placed in three classes. There are, firstly, what may be called International Ideas—ideas which influenced not only the people of Great Britain, but had their effect also upon other nations.

Secondly, there are principles more peculiarly British—home-made ideas, which modified the policy of the British Government without obtaining much, ~~or in some cases,~~ any credit abroad, either because they did not appeal to the temper of foreign states, or because they were only adapted to the special political and economic circumstances of Great Britain.

Thirdly, there were particular and definite theories formed about the character and policy of individual foreign states.

Under the first heading must be placed ~~what was~~ ~~certainly~~ the ruling political force of the day—Nationalism. The French Revolution had first given to this idea its overwhelming importance. France, always a strongly individualised state, had first adopted the idea of complete organic union of all territories allied to herself by blood or kindred feeling. Under Napoleon, and perverted partly by his personal ambition and partly by circumstances, this idea was lost, or was changed into that of imposing a distinctively French civilisation on all Western Europe, and in this form it inevitably awakened the dormant/

dormant national feeling of the states threatened, and produced the awakening of nationalist feeling in Spain and Germany which brought about Napoleon's downfall. 155.

Curiously enough, the success brought about by the nationalist revival did not end in a nationalist triumph, but rather in a reverse. This was partly owing to the fact that nationalism was a popular movement and was not favoured by the absolute governments ruling in most of the countries concerned: these governments saw that nationalism had formed an alliance with liberalism, which they ~~wished to suppress~~ *dreaded.* Austria, too, 63. was the state which had most say in the settlement of 1815, and Austria was ~~prevented~~ *almost forced* by her own constitution ~~from adopting~~ *To oppose* the principle of nationalism, and indeed was almost forced to oppose it.

del. (Nationalist activities continued beneath the surface, steadily spreading and growing stronger, and causing a series of upheavals, at first premature and often unsuccessful, but finally triumphing, in several important instances, until it was recognised by the governments of Europe as a political fact that must be taken into account in ~~all~~ their schemes.) Great Britain was from the first less hostile to nationalism than the other great powers. In the years following 1815, it is true, 156. by the reactionary government in power, largely shared the feeling of the absolute sovereigns abroad, and feared and disliked nationalism, as being too nearly connected with their bugbear, the Revolution. But the majority of the nation did not share this /

feeling, for the healthy instinct of the British people is always to take the weaker side and at this time nationalism in all its most picturesque aspects represented a revolt against oppression. Very shortly, too, the personality of a great practical^v statesman began to overrule that of the re-⁵⁷actionaries, and Canning saw the value of nationalism as an^v elevating influence, and used it in his struggle against the stifling grip of the Holy Alliance, and his effort to restore the Balance of Power.

7. ⁷ The Whigs accepted Nationalism as a political influence, and many of their leaders considered it almost part of their duty to further or at least to look benevolently upon nationalist agitation in foreign states. Palmerston was, perhaps, the most notable advocate of this point of view, as he^v certainly carried it out more daringly than any of the⁵⁸ others. Even the Tories were not free from the magical influence. At first both they and the Court opposed it strongly. ⁶⁶ But though the Court remained staunch to its old principles, the Conservatives to some extent fell away. Though they never adopted the principle so whole heartedly as the Liberals its influence was so all-pervading that it inevitably modified their views and coloured their opinions. They ceased to be actively hostile to it, and they recognised it as a political force that must be treated deferentially, and that was favoured by^v the majority of their fellow countrymen. Public opinion⁵⁹ in/

in Britain from 1848 onwards, was definitely engaged upon the side of nationalism, and the country was recognised by nationalist leaders abroad as their refuge in time of trouble.

This position on the part of Great Britain is the more extraordinary, when it is considered that the British Empire itself was the great negation of the new nationalism.

The form into which ^{*the theory of nationalism*} ~~this nationalist feeling~~ had now been moulded was, roughly speaking, the following: Every nation has a right to claim that all ~~its~~ members be united into a single state under a government approved by themselves, and no nation has a right to incorporate into itself by force any territories inhabited by members of an alien race; geographical or political convenience ought not to be allowed to override these principles.

It will at once be seen that the principle of nationalism in this form ran contrary to the whole course of the political development of Europe. In its extremest form it might even be said to be a retrograde step in the course of civilisation. Europe had steadily advanced through an intermingling of races and practically every European power had been built up by conquest and forcible incorporation. Most of the great nations were of mixed blood, and had been drawn from the most varied sources. And, curiously enough, it was the most pure-blooded of the European countries, - those in which either the Teutonic or the Celtic element most definitely predominated/

predominated - that had until this time, shown the least capacity for unity ~~and~~ responsible self-government - that is, Germany and Ireland. The second part of the theory was of course the most dangerous. Had it been always recognised, the development of Europe would have been checked at its very outset. If the forcible incorporation of territory had always ⁶² been repudiated, most of the great powers of Europe would have been to this day a collection of tiny independent states squabbling among themselves.

70. This is not an attempt to justify forcible conquest: it is only intended to recall, in this con-

text, that the intermingling of races has been one of the great civilising influences in European history, and that it has taken place, as often as not, through forcible conquest. A temporary evil has been transformed into a permanent good; so that it is impossible to state, as a general principle, that conquest by force is good or ⁶³ bad. Every individual instance must be decided on its own merits. Has the conquering nation sufficient vitality to assimilate the conquered, and make it
 71. part of itself—or, as an alternative, has it sufficient political capacity to make the conquered race contented, while leaving/

leaving it its own local patriotic feeling? On the other hand has the nation which fights against conquest by a powerful neighbour sufficient vitality and political capacity to make a future for itself as an independent power without falling behind in the advance of civilisation? Several small nations have proved themselves equal to this task - Switzerland, Scotland. Others, while resisting foreign domination, have appeared incapable of unity and self-government, and so have failed to justify their resistance--as, Ireland up to the present day, and some might add, Poland. On the other hand, France

has showed an unequalled capacity for assimilating a population annexed by force: Great Britain a capacity equally great for making an alien population contented while preserving their national feeling - *e.g.* Wales, Scotland, India, South Africa; Austria, Russia, and to an even greater extent Germany, have proved themselves incapable of either assimilating or satisfying a foreign subject race: *e.g.* Poland, North Slesvig, Alsace-Lorraine, Italy, Hungary (and even Bohemia). Every case of foreign conquest should be judged by a consideration of the two peoples involved. ~~(A country which has shown itself incapable as a ruling power, unable either to satisfy or to absorb its new subjects, should not be allowed the unchecked domination of a conquered race. Those states, on the other hand, which have proved their ability to assimilate a population/~~

del.
 population forcibly annexed, and which is fairly equal to themselves in civilisation, but less suited to the government of an inferior or backward people, should rather satisfy their natural instinct for expansion by extending their culture to neighbours resembling themselves, than by increasing their colonial possessions among barbarous races.)

The people who, ~~(on the other hand)~~, show themselves incapable of self-government, or unable to develop their natural advantages, must inevitably fall the prey of more enterprising and resolute states. To love its liberty and fight for it bravely is not enough proof that a nation is worthy of independence. If that independence produces only civil strife and internal misgovernment, as in Poland in the 18th century; or the permanent destruction of the natural resources of the country, as in North-West Africa under Mohammedan rule; or in the prevention of the entrance of civilising influences and the growth of prosperity, as in the Turkish Empire; it is better for all concerned that the territory in question should be taken over by a competent, even if alien government.

Again, when the satisfying of the nationalist desires of a minority means the sacrifice of the unity or prosperity of a whole nation, as in the case of Ulster or Fiume, common sense and justice may have to override nationalist principles, *del.*
 (Or, if the position of such minorities interfered with the military and political security or the geographical unity of

a state, their wishes may have to be ignored, for to ^{yield to} satisfy them might mean, ~~(in one case)~~ a permanent weakness that is a ⁶⁷ temptation to war, ~~and in the other~~ ^{or} a perpetual source of irritation and litigation.

8 ⁸ In justice to Victorian statesmen, it must be admitted that to some extent they were sensible that the new nationalist test was not of universal application, for they never permitted it to be applied to any part of the British Empire. When they were accused of inconsistency in their conduct towards Italy and towards Ireland, they replied, with perfect truth, that Italy and Ireland were not analagous cases. But beyond this hard line, they were quite undiscriminating. They applied the nationalist test to the circumstances of all their neighbours without ^{or} doubt, ⁶⁸ hesitation, ^{del.} ~~and fear,~~ and the thought that they might not act with perfect consistency in every instance kept them awake at night ~~fretting.~~

It may be noticed that Great Britain was almost the only power to adopt Nationalism as a principle of general application, though France for a time made some attempt to do so. To the foreign states, in whose history Nationalism was now playing an important part, it was not a political principle, but a passion, a recurrent fever of enthusiasm. It ⁶⁹ drove them to action: but they were rarely tempted to consider its theoretic value in any case except their own. The German

German ~~The German~~ did not appreciate the Nationalist spirit as shown by the Frenchman, nor did the Italian admire it in ^{69.} the case of the Slav or the Greek. A few enthusiasts sometimes admitted it, and sometimes necessity imposed it on others, so that we find Hungarian, Pole or Italian in an unofficial alliance against the arch-enemy of Nationalism, Austria. But as soon as the Nationalist spirit in any state became the dominant power, this almost invariably ceased. The moment the government became representative of the nationalist party, any ^{70.} restraint as regards the rights of other nations vanished. They considered their own case alone. Hence the frequency with which nationalist movements became imperialist movements.

It will be noticed that the new Nationalism differed from older forms of the theory, partly in its aggressiveness and partly in its hostility to the idea of racial intermingling. In the first national wars of Europe, neither of these points ^{were} emphasised. The earliest of these wars, the Swiss and Scottish wars of independence, and the French revival under Joan of Arc, were all three entirely defensive in character. Nor did racial hostility play any part in them. ^{71.} (~~Scotland, for example, had showed every disposition towards complete unity with England, until provoked into revolt by the misgovernment of Edward I.~~) The new nationalism, in fact, tried to emphasize the divergence between nations in language, habits, feeling, culture. ~~Its teaching was not so much 'Love your/~~

your country' as 'Hate your enemy's'. The old defensive national wars were not followed by aggressive ones; their aim was to secure the position of the people whose independence was threatened: but the new nationalism, wherever it triumphed, showed the same characteristics of hatred of its rivals, jealousy, and greed of conquest, and was aggressive in proportion to its strength. It foreswore its old creed, and ignored the rights of its neighbours. British statesmen had not yet perceived the way in which these nationalist movements were transformed into imperialist movements, ^{as} ~~as~~ a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, ~~and~~ and they were, therefore, deceived as to the real nature of the cause which they patronised.

Closely connected with Nationalism was the Liberal movement. The two had the same enemies, the same interest in opposing absolute government, and in one respect, — on the point of Self-determination, the right of every people to choose its own form of government, — they were absolutely at one. Self-determination, it so happened, meant for most of the peoples concerned the expression both of their Liberal and their Nationalist aspirations. The connection is, of course, not a necessary one. It is quite conceivable that a people might determine in favour of absolute government, or that liberal and nationalist interests might really be contrary — as they were later proved to be in the case of the duchy of Holstein. In most cases, however, they were identical, and this led/

led to a general habit in England of regarding the Liberal and
 80 the Nationalist movements as one and the same.

The Liberal movement on the Continent meant something different from what it meant in Great Britain. In both cases it stood for the negation of absolute government. But in Britain the ideal form of government was a constitutional or limited monarchy on the strict English model, and the British people habitually assumed that all foreign states with liberal tendencies were moving in this direction. Certainly, the English model was greatly admired abroad, and some new constitutions were partly modelled upon it: but there was also a strong tendency to favour a republican form of government: and upon the continent, Liberalism was connected with Democracy at a ⁷⁴ much earlier date than it was in Great Britain.

There is, of course, no real connection between Democracy, whether in its high ideal form, "government of the people for the people, by the people," or its lowest form of mere mob rule, ⁷⁵ and liberal constitutionalism. The latter is an essentially aristocratic form of government. By its careful balance of forces, it attempts to prevent any one class or party gaining a preponderating influence on affairs, but this same system of checks and balances tends to keep a disproportionate amount of power in the hands of the more educated classes, in theory the best fitted for governing. In both these points it is/

is the exact contrary of democracy, which gives the whole power unreservedly into the hands of the majority, and carefully excludes the government of the intellectual minority who represent the aristocracy of the nation. ⁽¹⁴⁾ The British statesmen in the first half of the 19th century carefully distinguished between liberal and democratic feeling at home, though perhaps they were slightly less careful abroad: but as time passed, and democratic feeling at home grew steadily stronger, and democratic theories were continually formulated, their minds were insensibly penetrated by the influence; it was necessary to conciliate democracy, and by concessions to it, the ~~the~~ Liberal defences were gradually broken down. The Liberal party itself slowly came to be regarded as the party whose duty it was to further the growth of democracy. ⁽⁹⁾ Presently an ambitious and broad-minded Conservative leader, in order to gain popular support, took this duty out of the hands of the hesitating Liberals, and did the work himself. The transformation was now complete: Democracy, and not liberalism, was the acknowledged tendency of the British constitution. When the period opens, this change was in process, but statesmen of the "overlapping generation" still held the lead in all parties, and it was still Liberal constitutionalism that they upheld and admired abroad and at home. ⁷⁷

This led them into several errors. In the first place, by confusing National and Liberal aspirations, they formed/

¹⁴⁾ using the term in the classical sense.

formed the idea that a Nationalist revival inevitably led^{78.} to the establishment of constitutional government on the English model. As the Nationalist leaders were frequently Liberal leaders, this was an easy mistake to make: But they did not allow for the fact that the connection was not inevitable, and^{89.} that though the Nationalist tendencies might be successful, they need not necessarily work themselves out on Liberal lines, but might, while fulfilling their own aims completely, take another direction. This was what happened, for example, in Germany, where Nationalist plans were eminently successful, but the Liberals were completely defeated.

Secondly, the British statesmen overlooked the fact^{79.} that the constitution which had worked so admirably in England might not be suitable to all other countries, which might not be sufficiently educated, or have sufficient material security for its successful operation, and might, therefore, prefer to choose other forms of government more suitable for themselves,^{90.} whether more republican in form, more democratic in nature, or more nearly approaching absolutism than the English Constitution. Constitutional government might work badly, and actually cause disorder and retrogression, if the people were not sufficiently advanced for it.

Thirdly, they were too apt to consider that certain qualities produced by the peculiar circumstances of Great Britain, were^{80.} the result of the British form of government. They considered/

considered that the British love of peace, moderation and order were the universal qualities of mankind (with the possible exception of the French) and ^{were} only brought to the surface by the British constitution. Given a government on the British model, all foreign states would be equally sedate, orderly, and devoted to peace. They did not see what difference in-
 defensible frontiers, imperialist ambitions, inexperience, bad laws, or territory unredeemed, could make to this. They did not perceive that the British love of peace was chiefly due to the fact that the British nation rarely saw ^{81.} any reason for going to war. They had no Rhine frontier to lure them; they could satisfy their imperialism quietly, as it were sub-consciously, in the colonies, without trouble or disturbance; they had long practice, owing to their isolated position, in
 92. peaceful administration; they had no Holstein, no Venice, continually crying to them for deliverance; they were not compelled to fight to gain room for expansion, ports for trade, or fertile provinces for production. Their love of peace was due to happy circumstance, not to the naturally pacific disposition of mankind expressed through representative institutions. ^{82.} To consider that the mere establishment of an English parliament abroad would confer this contented disposition upon Frenchman, German, Italian, Slav, or Greek, was too optimistic.

The principles deduced from these theories may now be briefly stated.

First, that a people with nationalist aspirations

93. will, once these are gratified, become a liberal constitutional state.

Second, that a country with a constitutional government will pursue a peaceful, and not an aggressive, foreign policy.

Third, that a nationalist government will favour nationalism in other countries.

Fourth, that a British government should be friendly to the progress of the national and liberal parties abroad. 83.

N.P. [These principles were distinctively those of the Liberal party in Britain; as has been said, they had much less influence upon the Conservative party, particularly in the first part of the Victorian period.

In discussing the ideas which have influenced British policy, the conception of the Balance of Power may occur 94. to the reader. The Balance of Power, however, is not so much an idea as a fact. It was a fact which had once been considered the most important in European politics, and in the 18th century most British statesmen had based their calculations upon it. Many of Britain's and of England's great wars had 84. been fought to preserve that balance, and the memory of this naturally had a great effect upon the minds of the Victorian statesmen. It may be doubted, however, whether any of them knew exactly what it implied. For the conduct of a policy 95. based upon the necessity for a Balance of Power, requires a readiness to face facts, a correct judgment, a detailed knowledge/

knowledge of the state of foreign **powers**, an intelligence that can continually shift its ground and follow the changes and re-grouping of the forces involved, ---qualities that they did⁸⁵ not possess.

Moreover, with the ascendancy of idealism the Balance of Power was falling into disrepute. Unpleasant associations were already beginning to attach to it⁸⁶. It was regarded by many as an unnecessary convention, the survival of old days of international rivalries, greed for gain, selfish and aggressive warfare: the days before Liberalism and Free Trade showed the enlightened world how wrong and how futile such things were. "Does it seem strange," said the "Times" in the midst of a frightful European crisis, "that we should say we are no longer anxious⁸⁶ about the Balance of Power?.... We have learnt to abandon political as we have abandoned commercial jealousies, and for the same reason... We know now that there is no surer way to the increase of our commercial greatness than through the increase of the commercial activity of others. What is true in economic is true in political science. We look with hope for ourselves to the free and healthy growth of our neighbours. This is the secret of the policy which has been stigmatised as leading to the alienation of our colonies and the disintegration of the Empire. It is the principle of the foreign policy⁸⁷ of the present generation."

The Manchester School of politics regarded the theory with a more intemperate hostility. Cobden talked of "the old and

15-
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 "Times", 6.10.1870.

ghastly phantom of the Balance of Power," while Bright, in a speech to his constituents at Birmingham, used stronger language. "The theory of the Balance of Power is pretty nearly
 98 dead and buried. You cannot comprehend at a thought what is meant by that Balance of Power. If the record could be brought before you---but it is not possible to the eye of humanity to scan the scroll upon which are recorded the sufferings which the theory of the Balance of Power has^v entailed upon this 86. country. It rises up before me when I think of it as a ghastly phantom which during one hundred and seventy years, whilst it has been worshipped in this country, has loaded the nation with debt and with taxes, has sacrificed the lives of hundreds
 99 of thousands of Englishmen, has desolated the homes of millions of families.... I am very glad to be here tonight, amongst other things, to be able to say that we rejoice that this foul idol---fouler than any heathen tribe ever worshipped---has been at last thrown^v down, and that there is^v none superstition 89. less which has its hold upon the minds of English statesmen and of the English people." ~~17~~

Turning next to the class of 'home-made' ideas, the first and most important of these springs naturally to every mind - the idea of Free Trade. It was not merely a principle
 100 of economics. Its influence upon British home and^v foreign policy generally over-ruled every other. Its prestige was extraordinary. The rigidity with which it was enforced, the fanatic^{al} devotion of its chief supporters, its universal acceptance in the United Kingdom, the almost religious awe which^v 90

surrounded it, and the sacrifices which were made for it, are almost beyond belief. The worship of Bacchus did not descend with more sudden and frenzied force upon Thebes, and its opponents seemed likely to suffer the fate of Pentheus. In a country so largely commercial, the great influence of such an idea was natural, but the narrow and blind fanaticism with which it was enforced was unexpected. The careful qualifications with which its original inventor had surrounded it were ignored. The Free Trade of Gladstone was as different from Adam Smith's ^{91.} ~~was~~ Mill's Utilitarianism as from Bentham's, the letter was unaltered, but the spirit was transformed. It was the most universal and inflexible rule, and all other ideals gave way before it.

del. ~~It is not necessary further to examine the idea of Free Trade here, having once stated the important place which it occupied, it may be left to be dealt with more fully in another chapter.~~

^{92.} Closely connected with Free Trade was the strong desire for the preservation of peace which existed among a certain section of British politicians. For, although the advocates of Peace were not consciously insincere when they argued the question upon moral grounds, they were certainly biassed to some extent by the consciousness that peace was necessary for British commercial interests, that war was expensive, and that a war which was in any degree protracted and unsuccessful might make them lose their popularity with an electorate whose ^{92.} livelihood depended largely upon the state of foreign trade.

Moreover, the spread of Free Trade principles was held to be
 103. a preventive of war, as it would foster understanding and
 intercourse between the nations, would increase their inter-
 dependence, and in the end, by making each one unable to
 stand alone, would make war actually impossible.

The moral plea in the case, of course, lay in
 the statement that peace is a positive and invariable
 good, and that war is a positive and invariable evil. The
 devotees of Peace admitted no exceptions to this rule: 93
 they would not admit the possibility that in certain cir-
 cumstances peace might produce more miseries than war.
 These advocates of peace at any price were men of pure
 104. ideals and lofty disinterestedness, but it is undeniable
 that they were ready to sacrifice the honour and the pres-
 tige of their country---as mere high-sounding names---for
 the preservation of the material comforts of peace; and this
 was in a state/

@ Cobden admitted that war, in very rare cases, might be
 necessary. Bright did not.

state whose most important interests lay among the races of the south and east, where both honour and prestige were a necessary condition of orderly government: and - though let it⁹⁴ again be stated, unconsciously - they were influenced in their wish for peace, by the wish to be economical and to foster trade: for some of the most important of them were master^v manufacturers. To some extent they imposed their peace policy upon their colleagues; but among the latter, the moral aspect of the question was subordinated to the material. Where Bright and Gladstone talked of the crime of war, Granville and Salisbury talked frankly of the effect on commerce and the electorate.

More generally received than "peace at any price" principle⁹⁵ was the theory of Non-Intervention. This theory had undergone a considerable change since the days of Canning. In its extreme form, it states that Great Britain, as an island and sea-power, is not directly concerned in any purely continental question, and should not interfere in any quarrel where her naval, mercantile and colonial interests are not directly threatened. Further, for the same reason, Britain should keep clear of any intimate relations with foreign governments, and should form no alliances except of the most temporary nature.

Since 1815, there had been a section of opinion which wished to withdraw from all continental concerns, leave neighbours to fight^v out their own quarrels, and devote their⁹⁶ country's energies entirely to her own affairs, secure behind the/

the barrier of the Channel and the fleet. This policy, once
 107. a possible one, had become impracticable with the continual
 increase of intercommunication, which was lessening distances
 and drawing the nations closer together. The ideas that Bri-
 tish interests could not be threatened by quarrels among the
 other European states, or that the Channel was a permanent
 barrier to foreign aggression, was now a mere illusion. ~~(To-
 day we see another Great Power shrinking in the same way from
 the increased responsibility of international action, and en-
 trenching itself in its turn behind the defence of the Atlan-
 tic, with results perhaps still more unfortunate than those
 which attended a similar policy on the part of Great Britain.
 108. Reaction after a great war perhaps accounts in part for the
 attitudes of both powers.)~~

The belief that Britain should keep her hands free,
 and avoid all alliances save those for a temporary object,⁹⁷
 was very generally received. Scarcely any statesman was
 wholly free from the attraction of the idea. We find contin-
 ual references to it in the letters and papers of the period.
 Britain is strong enough to stand alone: she needs no friends
 abroad: she should keep her hands free so that if danger
 comes she may be able to act in the way she thinks best with-
 out hindrance. ~~(The argument, that danger might come, and
 109. that owing to this policy she might find herself without a
 friend in Europe, was countered only by the repeated assertion
 that she was strong enough to stand alone.)~~ "All we could wish
 for/

for is to keep free from all engagements." 18)

"We are strong enough to take care of ourselves without alliances--if only we do not waste our force on matters which 98
do not concern us." 19)

"I am bound by conviction, even more than by credit, to the principle of progressive reduction in our military and naval establishments, and in the charges for them, under the favouring 20)
circumstances which we appear to enjoy."

"The time for permanent alliances is past." 21)

Everyone will recall Gladstone's anonymous article in 1870, with its often-quoted references to "happy England" protected by her "silver streak of sea" from the troubles of other nations. The Times, about the same date, referred to our favoured position with humorous superiority, and to its effect on our neighbours.

"They don't like our cold-blooded caution, our fortunate 99
isolation, our virtuous complacency.... England....has no schemes of aggrandisement, and not even the opportunity. She has no game whatever, except just to hold her own.... The time has passed when it could matter to England whether any Western power possessed a few square miles more or less, or the command of this or that fortress." 22)

18) Loftus, I, p. 100.

19) Lord Salisbury to Lord Lytton, 14 Sept. 1877; Salisbury II, p. 151.

20) Gladstone to J. Russell, ~~24 Jan. 1876~~. Russell, p. 422.

21) Dilke, speech to his constituents, 24 Jan. 1876; Dilke, I, p. 13.

22) Times, 26. Sept. 1870, 11 July 1870.

Such confident assertions of the principle that "man
 113 is not strong until he stands alone", and of the assured posi-
 tion of Great Britain in her isolation, might have been well
 enough, if, when the need to act^v came at last, her policy had¹⁰⁰
 been fearless and resolute; but when the time came when strong
 action was called for, the same men who had supported this po-
 licy were the first to say that Great Britain could not move,
 because she had no continental ally, and that her military re-
 sources were quite inadequate to carrying on a war in Europe
 alone.

In this lay the greatest weakness of the "no-alli-
 114 ances" policy. It was a possible policy, if the really grand
 resources of the country had been so organised that they could
 be used in the case of war; but as^v it was, many months have¹⁰¹
 passed before Britain could take military action; and though
 the navy during this time would guard her shores from invasion,
 and might even blockade in part an enemy coast and shell a few
 seaboard towns, still the subject of quarrel could, in the
 meantime, be settled over her head by powers who were ready for
 instant action. The ministers who advocated the "no-alliance"
 policy were quite aware of this; but they made no attempt to
 115 remove the weakness which made that policy absurd. Two
 courses were^v open to them: either to put the army on such a¹⁰²
 footing that a moderate number of well-trained men with up-to-
 date equipment could be instantly available for use in Europe;
 or /

or frankly to admit that Britain could not play her proper part in European politics without having an ally who could help her temporarily until her own splendid ~~resources~~ could be made effective, and so to come to a serious understanding with some foreign power. Neither of these courses ^{was} ~~were~~ taken, even after the danger had been demonstrated more than once.

116. That intellectual weakness already described prevented anyone from looking the facts in the face, and deciding one way or the other. ¹⁰³ [Had this policy of Non-Intervention really been followed, this might have had a less unhappy effect; but unfortunately it was only taken to mean Non-Intervention in the way of action. Great Britain was to set a good example, to the less self-denying states of Europe, by remaining peaceable, apart, minding her own business, it was said. Unluckily British statesmen did not confine themselves to their own business. They thought themselves free, from their superior vantage point, to criticise and ¹⁰⁴ give advice to their less fortunate neighbours. There was, in fact, an attitude of moral superiority about the statesmen of the day which must have been trying to the temper of their friends abroad. They looked at the duplicity of foreign statesmen - which was so general as to be almost universal - as if it had been cheating at cards. ~~If they detected a certain person in double dealing they at once set him down as a scoundrel. They were, of course mistaken. The peccant foreigner was merely playing the game of/~~

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They were wrong: the foreign statesman was merely playing the game of politics by the rules universally received on the continent, and only cavilled at in England. On matters of national honour he was commonly as sensitive as the British statesmen themselves. He also, if he found it necessary to break a treaty,¹⁰⁵ excused himself on highly moral grounds, even as they did: only he could not understand why they expected him to believe their moral excuses; he did not ask them to believe him, as long as they pretended to in public: why should they ask more of him? In fact, the moral superiority of Great Britain carried no weight whatever on the continent. The foreigner shrugged his shoulders, pointed to broken engagements and contradictory actions, to the Opium War with China, the ~~D~~on Pacifico Incident, the deplorable condition of ¹Ireland, and asked what difference ¹⁰⁶ there was between the policy of Britain and of his own country? He simply put his island friend down as a hypocrite.¹⁰⁶

I, Section III.

III

There remains the ~~the~~ third class of political ideas--- those which attached to foreign states special and unchanging characteristics, and produced a traditional policy ~~towards~~ those states, based on these supposed characteristics.

While certain national qualities and certain broad national aims can be, and sometimes are, preserved for long periods, the policy of a state at any given moment depends on many other factors besides these---the form of government, the individuals at the head of affairs, the condition of the material resources of the country, the moral and intellectual state of the people, and so on. Even traditional policies are always liable to be suddenly modified, or even reversed, by the position of the country in relation to foreign states. In certain circumstances the whole nature of a people may undergo a change. A disastrous war may shock a militant nation into a sincere desire of peace; economic conditions may produce martial or pacific dispositions; a tendency long dormant may be given life and activity by the influence of a few able men who divine it: and so on. It is, therefore, dangerous work to form a definite notion of the character of any state as a permanent element in politics.

The foreign policy of Great Britain was largely directed by certain traditional ideas about four states---France, Germany, Russia, and Belgium.

The period with which this essay is concerned saw the rivalry of France and Germany become acute; it saw the rise of a new Germany threaten the position of France, saw France's

feeble and vacillating efforts at opposition, and finally saw the temporary ruin of France and the complete triumph of Germany.^v The struggle was perhaps inevitable. France in 1860 was ruled by a man whose declared policy it was to make that country the guide and leader of all the progressive tendencies of Europe, a man whose position at home depended on the position he held in the councils of the European powers. The rise of a first-class power in Central Europe, a power far stronger, more compact, more virile, than Austria; marching with the least defensible frontier of France, and dominating the territories which her rulers had long desired to acquire: this threatened the imperial position of France, a position which depended then less on her actual strength than on the artificial prestige of a great name, and on the real but damaged prestige of a policy, which, though inspiring in itself, had not always been consistently carried out. Napoleon III saw that the dread which at present attached to his government would vanish before the rise of a strong united Germany, like a paper umbrella in a shower of rain. He could not allow Germany to make such an advance, without obtaining some compensation for himself: but the romantic, humane, and feeble spirit of the would-be Bonaparte shrank from the prospect of a great war, and from any definite decision. He continually postponed action, first adventuring, then drawing back, and allowed his position to be steadily undermined, until at last his rival could force him into action in circumstances

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specially unfavourable to France.

For Germany also the struggle was from the beginning inevitable. Bismarck's aim was not only to establish Germany
8. as a united state under Prussian leadership; ^{but} ~~he wanted~~ to place
his country in a position so strong and so commanding that it
could only be threatened by a coalition of all the Great Pow-
ers against it. He wished Germany to be secure in herself, 112
and to be able to dominate and direct the affairs of Europe in
her own interest. This could not be if a power equally, ~~(or~~
~~almost equally)~~ strong, lay on her Western frontiers, even if
that power was not eagerly competing for a partial control of
the Rhine, and of important North Sea ports. Germany, too,
9. and in particular Prussia, had many memories of enmity with
France, and bitter humiliations to revenge upon that country,
and these feelings were fully shared by Bismarck. He had, too, 113
no scruples about war, and none of the sensitiveness that made
Napoleon shrink from seeing the bodies of men who had died at
his command. Bismarck was economical and sensible, and had no
wish for war for the sake of war. He was no Kriegsherr; but
he had made up his mind that it was necessary to clear the
way for Germany by a complete defeat of France, and her remo-
10. val from the first rank of the powers. He was only anxious
to arrange that this struggle should take place in circum-
stances the most advantageous to Germany and the least advan-
tageous to France. *(This meant paying for the war)*

~~Great Britain was thus confronted between the years~~

1860/

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~~67~~ ~~moderately~~ ~~255~~

In 1860, when travelling in Germany, Richard Cobden had observed that that country was in a dangerous mood. There was a general feeling, he said, of "We must have a war with France sooner or later, and it is the only way in which we can get rid of our internal discords, and swamp the small states under the rule of Prussia." It would be the simplest way of attaining unity. "If they are sure they can reckon on the support of England," he wrote, "In case of a rupture with France, they will not be long without an occasion for a quarrel."²³⁾

Great Britain was thus confronted, between the years 1860

23) Cobden, p. 255.

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1860 and 1871 with the question: France or Germany? Three successive crises in the struggle took place, and in each case by the skilful arrangements of the Prussian statesman, the ^{neutrality} ~~mentality~~ of Great Britain was practically equivalent to her siding with Germany; for in each crisis Bismarck confronted an enemy so much weaker than himself that only the intervention of a third party could have made the combat^v equal.

Great Britain^v felt, ~~clearly and~~ rightly, that neither she nor any other foreign power had any right to interfere to prevent the union of Germany; but Germany's right to work out her own salvation without interference depended on the methods which she adopted. It was for some time uncertain, what the aims and characteristics of the new state would be: whether republic or monarchy, democracy or aristocracy; whether it ²¹ ~~should~~ include ~~or exclude~~ Austria^{or not}; and, more significant than all, whether Germany should be unified by all the individual states being welded into one organic whole, or by ~~one~~ strong state taking^v the lead and grouping the others around it.

The first attempt at union failed, and the task was finally performed successfully by the strongest of the German states, Prussia. It gradually appeared that the new Germany was to be ~~(a Germany)~~ ruled by Prussian methods and animated by a Prussian spirit: Prussia was not to be absorbed into Germany; she was to impose her own peculiar qualities upon her fellow German states.

13. As soon as it became clear that Germany was to be unified by Prussia, and that Prussia considered herself free to adopt means which were reactionary and atavistic, the situation was altered, and Germany's right to move freely and without hindrance from outside was no longer unquestioned. So long as her action was confined within the limits of the frontiers of Germany, Prussia might be left to carry out her policy, even if her methods did not always commend themselves to moralists. When, however, she came into contact with foreign states, it could not be to the interest of civilisation that the public law of Europe should be disregarded, and the rights of the weaker states violated, without a protest.
14. Would the formation of a united Germany be so great a benefit to the world, if raised on such foundations? There was no indication that, her object for the present gained, Prussia would change her methods.

"The same arts that did gain
A power, must it maintain".

and there was every prospect that if she found her policy successful, she would be the more inclined to cling to it.

- The importance of the rise of this new Prussian-German State was due to the fact that it introduced a new element into politics. What that element was has been expressed in various catchwords: The State as Power; Might is Right;
15. Bismarck's own poetic "Blood & Iron". It was, in fact, not new in itself; it was -

...The simple plan
That they should take that have the power,
And they should keep who can.

~~It was a theory that~~ ^{This theory} all states have acted on at times, and Prussia in particular had long ago made it her own. But never before, not even in the days of the great Frederick, had any state or any statesman dared to adopt and practice it without reserve or condition, comprehending it in all its aspects, and deliberately modelling the whole life of the state so as to give it full scope; thereby creating a driving force perhaps never equalled before. No one had had the courage to make so clear a break with all the restraints of civilisation. A thousand ties, conventions, or weaknesses affected ^{even the most} ~~them~~ ^{reckless} moral scruples, religious feeling, the ambition for glory, chivalry, romantic sensibility, the unwillingness of a humane man to contemplate destruction, cowardice, incapacity, prejudice; - all the emotions, thoughts and habits that make up the minds of men had intervened to prevent a consistent application of this philosophy of state. It was now taken in hand by a man of iron strength of character, of a mind empirical and unprejudiced, and of unequalled political capacity; a man almost as free as if he had not been mortal, from ethical and emotional restraints. Bismarck had only one weakness - he suffered from a surplus power of hate.

It must be remembered that even the attainment of German unity would have necessitated a revision of the foreign policy of Great Britain. A power as strong as a united Germany/

Germany must inevitably be, could not enter the European family without altering the balance; and (therefore) all traditional policies should have been carefully scanned and corrected in the light of this new arrival. But if such a revision was necessary in any case, it was much more necessary when the policy

18. of the new state was ^v(seen to be) such as has been described. ~~(It must be remembered that)~~ 9 in 1860 the position of Prussia as "the State as Power" was very different from what it had been even in the reign of Frederick II. ^{In spite of} 123 Notwithstanding all the faults of individual statesmen or nations, the "moral standard" in politics had really been raised since then: many advances had been made in the drawing up and enforcing of a code of international law, and there had been progress in the direction of international action to prevent war. Notwithstanding

19. their often reactionary and selfish aims, the ^vCongresses of the period 1815 onwards, had rendered real service to the cause of arbitration and union by their mere existence. The policy, therefore, which had been comparatively legitimate in an age ^vof "every man for himself" had now become, ¹²⁴(in fact,) a crime against the new law and higher morality of Europe; the gentleman adventurer with letters of marque had become the pirate. The whole-hearted adoption by a modern state of a policy which even a hundred years before had shocked the more enlightened minds of Europe, was clearly a retrograde step

20. in civilisation: but it had, ^v~~directly~~ ^{just} in so far as the other nations/

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nations considered themselves bound by international law, a chance of success. ~~(As such it should have been faced and judged by the statesmen who had to deal with it.)~~

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In Great Britain, however, these statesmen failed to understand the new apparition. It may be said that so early in the day they could not realise the tendency of Bismarck's policy: but as it happened, the very first time that this policy was seen in action, the nature of Bismarck's methods and his objects were very clearly shown, as well as the supreme ability with which he directed ~~(the whole)~~ affairs. In spite of this, British statesmen were blinded and confused by the ideas which had long guided their conduct, and to which they desperately clung. The ideas of Non-Intervention, Nationalism, and the policy of the Peace-at-any-Price party, as will be seen, hampered and confused their action; but they were even more strongly influenced by their preconceived ideas about France and Germany, and the relations of those countries to Britain. ~~(They were also unable in their state of mind, to distinguish clearly between their desire to see a~~
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~~united Germany, and their disapproval of the policy which this Germany seemed to intend to follow.)~~

It has been already pointed out that the mere appearance of a united Germany would have necessitated some revision of British policy; but the British Government made no attempt to face either problem. They did not realise the full effect of the appearance of a new Great Power; nor did they understand/ 125

1858
understand the urgent necessity of checking this revival of the policy of force at its outset.

23. The reason for the failure in the latter case was, probably, that they regarded Bismarckism as a very transient apparition; they believed at first that Bismarck's authority would be of short duration, and that on his fall his policy would be abandoned. They did not contemplate that he could convert a whole nation to his creed. 126

There were two ideas about Germany, rather inconsistent, yet often held simultaneously by the same persons. Roughly speaking, however, the general public was ruled chiefly by the one, and the politicians by the other.

The popular view was ~~what may be called~~ the sentimental idea of Germany. The man in the street had a vague notion 24. of Germany as a place consisting chiefly of Biergarten, the Black Forest, the Harz Mountains, and the Rhine; inhabited by maidens with large blue eyes and yellow plaits who spent most of their time spinning; and by large stout men with untidy^v 127 hair, drinking out of picturesque mugs, singing "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott", and "Aennchen von Tharau", and talking about 'Freiheit', and 'Barmherzigkeit'. The German of this popular idea, in England also, was the 'Professor' of Louisa Alcott's American book for girls, meek, mild, silly, kind-hearted, unpractical, unselfish, and untidy. The prevalence of this type of German in light English literature ~~was~~ extraordinary. In literature/

25. literature of a higher type the same Germany appeared, with the romantic elements emphasized and the grotesque ones smoothed away: as, for example, the Germany of Swinburne's 'Litany of Nations':

I am she beside whose forests and whose mountains
Slept Freedom armed . . .

14 This "dark and true and tender" German was compared to his advantage with the superficial, fickle Frenchman, This estimate of France being chiefly based on the fact that she had three or four times changed her form of government; the fact that she had throughout and with an extraordinary persistence preserved her national characteristics and aims, was not considered to affect the question. (This feeling

del. 26. ~~was shared by educated persons who were influenced by the study of German literature, who overlooked the fact that of the three greatest names, Goethe and Schiller had not associated themselves with the nationalist revival of Germany, and Heine absolutely took the side of Napoleon, and forsook his twilight German land for "Französisch helles Tageslicht".)~~

At the same time

All the intellectual classes were impressed by the immense benefits conferred by Germany on humanity in most of the arts and sciences. Those who visited Germany ^{especially the North} were struck by the ability and superior education of the people. "La Prusse . . . donnait au monde le spectacle déconcertant d'un admirable développement intellectuel, et d'une complète impuissance politique". ²⁴⁾ It was very natural to wish that a nation so gifted/

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Denis, "Fondation de l'Empire Allemand," p. 17.

gifted should take its proper place in the political world. The circle was incomplete without her, and it was inevitable that almost exaggerated hopes should be based on her revival. "Europe would linger in torpor and become retrograde until Germany took the initiative of a policy. All other countries would lead Europe in a wrong direction. Germany alone could save Europe". ⁽²⁵⁾

So general was this feeling that even the politicians could not escape being influenced by it in their views of 28. Germany. They had, however, besides this vague, almost unconscious prepossession, a definite theory about Germany, based, as they believed, not on sentimental or emotional grounds, but on cold facts. 130

This Germany of their imagination was weak, incapable of a definite policy or of strong and daring action; able to talk but reluctant to do; and always ready to be frightened into good behaviour by threats and bullying from Austria or from Britain. This was ^{at least} the case with Prussia; and the German states outside Prussia were negligible. 131 "Bismarck . . backed the worst horse of the lot", said Disraeli to the 29. Prussian ambassador, "for Prussia is a country without any bottom, and in my opinion could not maintain a real war for six months". As this comment was made as late as August 1864 it would be interesting to know what, in Disraeli's opinion constituted "a real war". ⁽²⁶⁾

They/

⁽²⁵⁾ Sir Eyre Evans Crowe to his son. See Sir J. E. Crowe's ~~Reminiscences~~ p. 377. ⁽²⁶⁾ Buckle IV p. 348. Crowe, p. 377.

They were (~~considerably~~) influenced in forming this idea, by the memory of the Prussian debacle in 1806; and this impression was confirmed by the events of 1848-52. They did not realise how much the disasters of those times could be attributed to the failure of the leaders only - to the cowardice ~~and~~ incapacity of the rulers far more than to any essential want in the character of the people themselves. It is certain that they very much underestimated the strength of Germany, ^{& Prussia, The} both ~~her~~ natural resources, and the ability, determination, and fighting power of ^{The German} her people. They completely failed to realise that the power frittered away by a Frederick William IV. might become a tremendous weapon when reorganised and applied by a Bismarck. They made no attempt - and this is the most serious indictment against them - to follow the development of Prussia between 1852 and 1863, when they had their first brush with Bismarck. They were quite unaware of the immense progress that had been made in civil administration, military strength, and above all, in patriotic feeling, during this period. They were unaware of a gathering of popular forces that was strong enough to sweep away the old incapable absolute governments. This was not for want of warning. Though the government itself made not the slightest effort to understand German affairs, ~~(in spite of their neglect)~~ some ^{British} ~~of their~~ agents interested themselves and attempted to awaken the ministers to what was going on: but it was in vain.

27) @ The "Times", later on, attributed the failure to the fact that the revolution was "conducted by democratic methods borrowed from France, and inspired by too much of the shallow presumption and bitter social jealousy which came from the same quarter." 14.5.1875. 14 May 1875.

When British statesmen at last realised that the
 32. mild and incapable Germany of their ~~imagination~~^v was really making an effort towards unity and was going to establish herself as a great power, they were pleased, and followed her progress with benevolent interest.

There was a general feeling that Germany was, out of all European states, chosen to be the ally of Great Britain. The supposed bonds of race, and similarity of habit and tone of mind, had their influence upon popular opinion. "The Germans are a branch of that race which is destined to people and subdue the earth," said the "Times" in 1870, "Were even our old Saxon blood not 'thicker than
 33. water,' we could not remain unconcerned spectators of so unaffected and undemonstrative an expression of patriotism. It is done in the style we should ourselves deem most natural and most becoming."
 (28)

"Our true alliance," said Sir Charles Dilke, "is not with the Latin peoples, but with men who speak our tongue, with our brothers in America, and our kinsmen in Germany and Scandinavia."
 (29)

The principle^{al} reason, however, for the ^{"natural alliance"} ~~statesman~~ was that Germany was believed to have no interests that could clash with those of Britain. She had no navy, and very
 34. little sea-coast. Her trade and manufactures, as far as competition was concerned, were negligible. As several German Liberal leaders had been converted to Free Trade

28) ^{July} Times, 21.7.70. 29) Dilke In an electoral speech, ~~1870~~, I, p. 104. Did Sir Charles Dilke really suppose it was easier for an Englishman to learn to speak German than to learn to speak French?

Trade principles, and as Germany had not then a very high protective tariff, these judges jumped to the conclusion that a liberal united Germany would become a great Free Trade power. Then, too, it was said that the Germans were peace-loving, and not quarrelsome and aggressive; no evidence was ever produced for this belief, but it still persisted after Prussia had provoked two wars, the first with the full approval of the German people as a whole. We find

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35. Clarendon writing in 1866, "I can't believe in Germany going to war," and in 1867, "Nevertheless I believe in peace, for Prussia will never attack France." ^{At} ~~about~~ this time ~~the~~ Cowley solemnly warned Bismarck, "I tell him that if Prussia is prudent peace will be preserved; but if she goes too fast with the southern states I will answer for nothing... I am quite sure, however, from his language that he will give no encouragement in that direction." There is something piquant in the idea of ^{Cowley} ~~Clarendon~~ answering to Bismarck for the peace of Europe.

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1536. Then Germany had no interests in the East, and no colonial interests. Therefore, having no grounds for quarreling with Britain, she was destined to be her "natural ally."

Liberals and Conservatives vied with each other in pressing the idea of the "natural alliance." In 1878, after a friendly message ~~from~~ Bismarck, Lord Odo Russell communicated to him this reply from Salisbury, the foreign

30) ^{Clarendon II p. 310. 27 March 1866}
 (i) F.O. France, 1867. 27.3.66. (ii) F.O. France, 1867, 6.10.67. (iii) ~~Maxwell's~~ Clarendon, ~~Vol. II~~, p. 336.
 O.A.

secretary: "There are no countries who (sic) have so few rival-
 ries and so many objects in common and therefore there are none
 between whom understanding ought to be so good. We^v are indeed
 the only nation north of the Alps which has been able to look
 with unmixed satisfaction at the position to which the German
 Empire has attained." Two years later Salisbury wrote: "On the
 sound rule that you love those most whom you compete with least,
 Germany is clearly cut out to be our ally. Even our ancient
 friend Austria is not so completely free as Germany from any
 plans or interests which cross our own---for the present. Matt-
 ers will, of course," he admitted, "Have changed if it should
 ever enter Germany's head to ~~desire~~ Copenhagen or Amsterdam. But
 from his dreams to reality there is a long step and intermediate^{ly}
 we may in all things cultivate Bismarck's friendship without fear."

As late as 1887 Dilke wrote: "Little harm to English inter-
 ests has been done by Germany since she became the foremost of
 the continental powers, and few occasions of serious difficulty
 between the countries are likely to arise."

Stanley, coming into office in the middle of the Austro-
 Prussian War of 1866, wrote that he could not see that the es-
 tablishment of a strong power in Germany would be either a
 menace or a detriment to^v Britain, whatever it might be to other
 powers.

31) To Odo Russell, 10 April 1878. Salisbury II, p. 242.

32) To Odo Russell, 14 Jan. 1880. Salisbury II, p. 373.

33) "Present Position of European Politics," p. 55.

High hopes were formed of the benefits that would
 39. accrue to Europe when Germany took her rightful place.

"What untold heights," said Morier, "Of civilisation may not the world attain to with a German Empire preponderant over the destinies of Europe, if only there is as much wisdom in the upper stories of the building as there has been valour and self-sacrifice in the lower." 34.

"Those who rebel against this (the military supremacy of Germany)," said the "Times", "Would do well to ask themselves whether the military primacy, which must needs belong to some one power, may not be most safely entrusted
 40. to Germany.....a people which, by its history, its geographical position, its educational progress, and its domestic character is of all continental nations the least dangerous to Europe." 35)

The great romantic historian of the time wrote:
 (~~thus of the founder of the new Germany~~) "Bismarck, as I read him, is not a person of 'Napoleonic' ideas, but of ideas quite superior to Napoleonic; shows no invincible 'lust of territory'; nor is tormented with 'vulgar ambitions,' etc; but has aims far beyond that sphere; and in fact seems to me to be striving, with strong faculty, by patient, grand,
 41. and successful steps, towards an object beneficial to Germans and to all other men. That noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation, and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vain-glorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and

over-sensitive France, seems to me the hopefullest public fact that has occurred in my time." ³⁶⁾

Perhaps, however, the English feeling can best be made clear by a quotation from Lord Augustus Loftus, a gentleman holding a distinguished position in the diplomatic service, and referred to by Disraeli as "our goosey-gander at Berlin." 144

42. "At this time," says Lord Augustus, writing of the conclusion of the Austro-Prussian War, "I wrote to Lord Stanley that I could not view with any dissatisfaction or fear of danger to England, an increase of power to Prussia. She was the great Protestant state of Continental Europe. She represented the intelligence, the progress, and the wealth of Germany. We have, I said, nothing to fear from her. She will become a power of great importance in maintaining the peace of central Europe. She will gradually advance in a constitutional system of government, and she will 43. play the part of a moderator in Europe. We have much in 145 common with her---our race, our religion, our mutual interests are all interwoven with Prussia, and our political interests should be identical. Why, I continued, should not Germany be allowed to constitute herself as she likes, and as Italy has done?..... A strong Germany will always look to England for moral support, and will naturally seek the alliance of a great maritime power." ³⁷⁾

What should be done if the situation changed was

36) Carlyle's public letter, 18.11.70. ^{Nov.} ³⁷⁾ ~~Diplomatic Reminiscences~~, 2nd series, Vol. I. p. 99-100.
Loftus

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never discussed. What if, once a strong power, Germany ⁷ should prefer to have a fleet of her own rather than depend upon the friendship and naval aid of Britain? What if she should decide that she wanted to be a great commercial power and have a colonial empire and great foreign trade? What if her liberal leaders were re-converted to protection, or others should take their place?

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At bottom, we find that all these considerations were subordinated to the great idea that the new Germany should act as a counterpoise to, and support Great Britain against, France and Russia.

"I have always," wrote the Duke of Argyll to Max Müller in 1888, "Been heartily in favour of it" (German unity) as the best check on France."

@-38)

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It may be said that ever since 1815, British statesmen had lived in a condition of chronic nightmare about what France, or Russia, would do next. France, being the nearest, gave them most frequent distress. In the eyes of most British statesmen, the whole European system should be arranged as if France were a sort of mad bull.

The British idea of France, like the British idea of Germany, dated from 1815, ^{the Napoleonic wars,} and had not been corrected since.

~~Argyll~~
~~Autobiography Vol. II, p. 297.~~

(38) Argyll, II, p. 297.

16
 France was regarded as a firebrand, always ready to pick quarrels, and always on the look-out to attack her neighbours at a favourable moment. The French were said to be vain, fickle, superficial, touchy, intoxicated with the idea of gloire---"a restless army and a people instinct with military spirit." The pursuit of gloire, in any other age, might have awakened a sympathetic response in England; but the Victorian age, with its Peace-at-any-price policy, its commercial mind, its love of comfort, and its Wesleyan morality, had no fellow-feeling for the intense sensitiveness of the French in matters of national prestige and honour.

Now on what grounds was this view based, that France is the country which always disturbs the peace of Europe? Even granting the fact (open to question) that France had provoked the Great War which began in 1792, was it to be supposed that she had not learned a lesson in 1815? If France had set out to conquer Europe, she had been prevented and punished by a coalition of all the European states against her. She had only been saved from pillage and partition by the generosity of two politic enemies, Metternich and Wellington. She had lost the flower of her manhood, and the physical health and strength of her people had been permanently impaired. She had lost too, by this time, the unearthly fire of 1789, which had carried her barefooted and untrained recruits to victory at Valmy. Was it likely that she would make again the attempt in which the Great Napoleon had failed?

During the period 1815-1860, France had done nothing

to prove herself guilty of the ~~evil tendencies of~~ ^{government} which she was accused. The only French ~~policy~~ which had pursued a dishonourable policy and one likely to disturb the peace of Europe had been ~~(immediately afterwards)~~ deposed by a popular revolution. For the one great European war between 1815 and 1859---the Crimean War---Britain was equally responsible, and in that war France had fought as Britain's ally. Moreover, the English people had been so eager for war that their government had scarcely been able to hold the popular frenzy in leash, and the national poet had celebrated with triumph the news that

"The long long canker of peace was over and done; while in France the Emperor had had to justify himself and persuade his people to every forward step: but England had already forgotten this. It was known that there was an old traditional ambition in France to acquire Belgium and the Prussian Rhenish provinces: but France had made no war on either of these points. She had acquiesced quietly, and cooperated in the work, when in 1830 Britain had stepped between her and her almost fulfilled desire, and procured the neutralisation of Belgium. In 1859 she had declared war on Austria, in a cause which Great Britain had always advocated, and in which several British statesmen were ready to declare war themselves; and she had done a great service to the world in the constitution of the Italian kingdom, taking as compensation the two half-French provinces of Savoy and Nice, which voted in favour of the transfer. She had had two revolutions, but they had produced no aggression against foreign states.

It was true that the relations of Britain with France had been generally friendly, for during ~~most~~ of this period the two states were allies; but the ~~history~~ of the alliance is unique, and one wonders that the French endured it so long. ~~(It was an alliance of the most one-sided character.)~~ While it lasted, France ~~loyally~~ supported Great Britain in all her aims ~~at~~ home and abroad; ^{and} while Britain used the power that the alliance gave her to checkmate or hinder every plan formed by France for her own advantage. Morier stated this ideal very clearly from the British point of view. 154

"As long as France restricts her action to legitimate objects (as in the creation of the Belgian kingdom in 1831) we go heartily with her and stand together as the representatives of Western Progress versus Eastern Reaction, but the moment she shows the cloven foot and attempts to assert her claim to a privileged position we at once throw our weight on the side of the Northern Powers, and make her feel that... we wouldn't stand any of that humbug." It is most interesting to watch the kind of clock-work regularity with which the process goes on. During the Belgian negotiations we step in some five or six times this way---so that England becomes the regulator by which the expansive force of France is utilised beneficially and productively, but always kept in check whenever it threatens to become destructive.... The peace of Europe was maintained for nearly forty years by a cordoñ sanitaire being traced round France, three-fourths of which was of iron rigidity, the remaining fourth being elastic and so fashioned that she could 155 156

take all the air and exercise required for ~~the~~ good/of her health. The Northern powers treated France like an incurable and dangerous maniac; we treated her like a person on the whole sane, but subject to dangerous hallucinations, and reserved to ourselves the power of falling back upon the handcuffs and strait waistcoats kept in store by the Northern Powers." ⁴⁰⁾

Perhaps never had Britain displayed herself to so much disadvantage as during the three successive "war scares" of 1848, 1851, and 1860, when Europe was afforded the spectacle of a first-class power in a state of frantic excitement and terror at the prospect of invasion from ^{another} ~~a neighbour~~ who had not moved a man or a ship for the fell purpose attributed to her, and one of whose chief objects was to be at peace with her island neighbour. At this time the alliance was nominally in force, and Palmerston wrote, "I must own that it looks as if those who direct the policy of France were banking up their fires in order to be ready to start against us... The conclusion I come to is, that the English government ought to accept as if seriously tendered every assurance of determination to maintain the Anglo-French alliance, and at the same time to push on our own defensive preparations just as if we believed those assurances were given only to lull us into a false security." ⁴¹⁾

In the meantime French soldiers and sailors had stood

⁴⁰⁾ Morier ~~II~~. II, p. 215. ^{Nov.}
⁴¹⁾ Palmerston to Delane, 5. ~~11~~. 59, Dasent's Delane ^I p. 324.

While this distrust of France and her aims was somewhat unreasonable, at the same time British statesmen overestimated the resources of France as greatly as they had underestimated those of Germany. It is hardly necessary here to recall the awe with which they regarded the unfortunate Louis Napoleon, - so much weight can a name and a glib tongue

carry. But the damage that had been done by the Great War (in France), and the condition of disorganisation, weakness, and dry-rot, into which, by 1860, ^{France} ~~she~~ was falling, was unknown in Great Britain. As late as 1866 and after Königgratz, Clarendon wrote deprecating the "mania for Prussianizing our Army", "I feel very convinced that there is no army in Europe to be compared with the French Army, especially in all its internal regulations". It may be objected that the French believed the same thing; but Bismarck knew better; and if the British Government regarded France as a dangerous neighbour it was their business to be accurately informed of the true state of her army and her administration.

Perhaps no influence had so great an effect in sowing hate and distrust of France in England as the "Times". Throughout this period, the policy of the paper was consistently anti-French, and the country and its governments were the objects of repeated attacks couched in language of unrestrained brutality.

In 1847, when the relations of the two states were critical (owing to the Spanish policy of Louis Philippe, which

helped to provoke the revolution of 1848), Lord Aberdeen was obliged to make a personal appeal to Delane. "I cannot regard without serious apprehension," he wrote, "The persevering and senseless rancour with which the French government is attacked, and especially M. Guizot, unquestionably the most friendly to England, and to English interests, of any French minister since the restoration. I believe his policy and sentiments to be still unchanged, but nations and governments, as well as individuals, will at length resent repeated insult.... From the great influence which you exercise over public opinion, I have frequently told you that I thought the peace of the two countries would be materials affected by the course you...pursue." 42)

The change of government in France brought no change to Mr Delane's views. In 1853 he visited Paris, and became imbued with the idea, which he never lost, that Napoleon hated Britain, and that, to keep his doubtful hold on the nation, he would enter upon an aggressive policy and try to make himself master of Europe. This view decided Delane's first attitude to the aspirations of Italy, and in 1858 Palmerston was obliged to appeal to him as Aberdeen had done. 43)

The defensive armaments, so often urged by the Times, and undertaken by Palmerston, were directed against France. "Ever since the Emperor gave the first sign of abandoning the alliance of the English people, we have lost no opportunity of recommending defensive preparations.....nor have

42) Aberdeen to Delane, 12 July, 1847. Dasent's Delane, I, p. 154.

43) Palmerston to Delane, 5 Dec. 1858. Dasent's Delane I, p. 305,

we been behindhand in exposing the demerits of the French Emperor, whom we thought, and still think to be, a suspicious friend and a most dangerous enemy," boasted the Times. 44)

~~(These continued attacks on the part of the leading newspaper prepared the public to expect the worst from France. In 1866 Clarendon and Granville were again obliged to ask Delane as a favour to moderate his tone in dealing with the Emperor.)~~

68. Fear of Russia was less perpetually in the minds of British statesmen, because that country was further off. It was a periodic, not a chronic, ailment. But it was equally a tradition, and equally it was left uncorrected by experience of the new world. Nobody seriously sat down to consider whether the possession of Constantinople by Russia would really be the irremediable disaster. ~~(it was said to be)~~ Nobody ever took the trouble to find out the fact that the baby Balkan states were not quite so ready to fall into the arms of Russia as was believed. No one ever suggested, that there was an alternative policy to that of bolstering up a rotten and barbarous Mohammedan state and making a permanent enemy of one of the greatest European powers by closing her natural outlets to the sea; or that it was possible, by supporting the small powers, to avoid both/ 167

44) Delane to Mr Potter, 6. May 59. Dasent, I, p. 310. ^{Delane}

69. both the danger of aggrandising Russia and the shame of being the accomplice of the Turk.

Hitherto Austria had been chiefly looked to by British statesmen as a balance-weight against the influence of Russia or of France, as the case might be: but Austria was very inadequate for the position thus given to her, especially after her ~~(Italian)~~ losses in 1859. So the watchers in London turned their eyes all the more eagerly towards the rising power of Prussia, and the prospect of a United Germany, which should take Austria's place.

They overlooked two possible difficulties. One was 40. that the weight of the new power might be so great as to upset the balance altogether. It might not only counter-balance 169 France, but overweigh her and even usurp her place. It was here that the policy followed by the new state became of the first importance: They might, ~~(in fact)~~ exchange King Log for King Stork. The second danger was, that the new power might not share their view that Germany and Britain were 'natural allies'. *In 1986 Randolph Churchill said to the German ambassador* ~~It might think it could make more out of an alliance that Germany was Britain's "natural ally." Bismarck wrote on the margin with one of the other powers. Suppose, for example, it should of the despatch: "But England is not ours." 45)~~ 41. ~~make a bargain with Russia? - This was, in fact, what it did do; but this was not contemplated beforehand by Great Britain.~~ 18

There still remains a small but influential body of opinion in Britain to be considered - that of the people who 170 understood the real strength of Germany, without understanding the ~~(great)~~ effect of Bismarck's policy ~~(on that country)~~. This party/

party ~~has already been discussed.~~ It included all the clear-sighted friends of Germany, who admired the good and great qualities of her people, were impressed by her tremendous resources, and ardently desired to secure for Britain an ally ~~so~~ valuable. ~~of such~~ ^{of these} The ablest ¹¹ was Robert Morier, attache at the British embassy at Berlin. It also included those persons of German blood and nationality, who could exercise some control on British policy. Of such the leaders were the Queen, the Prince Consort, and above all, Baron Stockmar, the ¹⁷¹ tutor ^{both wife & husband.} ~~of the two royalties,~~ The influence of such a position ~~as that~~ ^{of the Queen,} and of a mind so lofty, so pure, and so powerful as Stockmar's, was of course tremendous. The effect was great on every statesman who associated with Stockmar, or who, ~~(on entering a government)~~ came into ^{direct} contact with the Queen. ¹⁷³ ~~(After all, these people knew so much more about Germany than the professional politicians did!)~~

Where this party went astray was in their wrong estimate of the power of Bismarck and all that Bismarck stood for. As has already been said, they believed ~~Bismarck~~ ^{he} would not remain in ~~power~~ ^{office} long, and that his influence would be shaken off by the Liberal government which would follow him. ¹⁷² They could not attack Bismarck, even when they detested his methods, because, after all, Bismarck was doing for German unity what no man had done before, and to attack ^{him} was to ¹⁷⁴ hinder German progress. So, at least, it seemed to Morier. The Queen took another view, the romantic view of a woman. So revolted was she by the first display of Bismarck's policy that/

^{in 1866}
 that she wished absolutely to fight Prussia, holding that the German cause would thus be better served. Even she, however, was dazzled by Bismarck's success, and once the events which had offended her were past, she preferred to acquiesce in his policy for the sake of its result. Neither Morier nor the Queen contemplated the fact that the spirit of Bismarck would become so pervasive and powerful that it would infect the mind of the whole nation. The intense disgust felt by these friends of Germany for Bismarck's methods made them wholly misjudge the man himself. Even so keen an observer as Morier could write of him in 1866 as "a straw floating upon the current of public opinion".

Principal Grant Robertson's illuminating study of Bismarck contains a very striking description of Germany standing at the crossroads in 1860; hesitating between Bismarck and the Liberal Leaders, who showed each their own path of progress, the one to the Power-State: the other to the Liberal Constitutional Monarchy. He believed, as Germany's friends then believed, that the country was capable of a wholly different development, and that her fate at this moment trembled in the balance. This is true; but is not the divergence between the aims and methods of the two parties slightly over-emphasised? The point of view which represents the Liberal party as an innocent Little Red Ridinghood walking in the dangerous wood of international politics, and intercepted, deceived, and finally

ally/

46 (11)

II, p. 87 Vol. II. Wemyss Morier.

47) Robertson p. 126 ff.

and finally gobbled up by Bismarck as the wicked wolf, is dramatic but exaggerated. When it is considered how rapidly the Liberal elements in Germany assimilated Bismarckism, we cannot avoid the conclusion that they had already some innate tendencies in that direction.

"It is singular," said the Times in 1870, "That Prussia made more friends in Germany by Düppel and Sadowa than by all her intellectual and political eminence during the preceding fifty years."⁴⁸⁾

Mommsen, the highest example of German intellect at that time, who was at first a Liberal and an opponent of Bismarck's policy, in his old age recanted his views and came to the conclusion that he had been wrong in opposing Bismarck.⁴⁹⁾

"De 1850 à 1870, ce qui nous frappe, ce n'est pas la violence des ambitions prussiennes, c'est l'inanité des résistances qu'elles soulèvent, l'absence de conviction avec laquelle les ennemis les plus fougueux de Bismarck le combattent. Dans son rêve agité, la Walkyrie appelle son Siegfried."⁵⁰⁾

This is borne out by the history of the Slesvig-Holstein question. Undoubtedly the policy of Germany therein was less unscrupulous than that of Bismarck: but she showed exactly the same greed for territorial gains; the same disregard for the rights of nationalities when not German; the same indifference to international law and treaty obligations; and the same capacity

48) Times, 23 Dec. 1870.

49) Strictly speaking Mommsen was a Holsteiner of Danish descent.

50) He expressed his change of views in conversation with Sir W.M. Ramsay; I do not know if he ever did so publicly.

51) Denis, p. 33.

52) Cp. Beust's statement that if he had asked for Jutland in 1864 Germany would have backed him. Beust I, p. 258.

for hatred. @ ⁵³

49. The past history of Germany also brings some evidence in favour of this view. Apart from the truly Bismarckian policy of the Great Elector and the Great Frederick, apart from the selfishness of Prussia's conduct before Jena, it must be remembered that Prussia was the one state in 1813 which was wholly animated by the spirit of revenge. The policy of Austria and of Britain towards France had then shown the wisest moderation and generosity; the ruler of Russia---piquant situation!---had been animated by vague romantic dreams of freedom and human happiness: it was Prussia who had clamoured for the sack of Paris; it was Prussia who wanted to dismember France, and take from her the most devoted of her provinces; it was Prussia whose policy was most completely dominated by the desire for territorial acquisitions; it was Prussia who

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53
 @ Stockmar (son of the Prince Consort's tutor), a devoted Liberal and enlightened politician, wrote to his friend Morier in 1871, "I maintain that hatred is a delightful, though unwholesome, drink." Morier ~~Vols~~ II, p. 244.

who had showed the most complete disregard for the future peace of Europe.

Surely all this indicated that there were certain qualities of the ^{German people} nation which predisposed ^{them} it to an acceptance of Bismarck's policy, and which he divined and made use of. 179

19
81. In spite of this, however, there were admirable qualities in the Liberal party, and these it was that attracted and absorbed the attention of the British friends of Germany. A united Germany in which Prussia was merged, a Liberal constitutional state governed by the voice of the people acting through representative institutions, was one to attract all the best hopes of the Victorian idealist. From the sentimental but shrewd ^{Victoria,} ~~ally-mind at Osborne and Windsor,~~ to the just, keen, and enthusiastic diplomatist who was already the bête noire of the Foreign Office, all Germany's British friends wanted and ^{expect-} accepted a Liberal solution of the problem. They hated Bismarck's methods; but then he was doing the work they wanted done; and 180
82. so they influenced Great Britain, so far as they could, in favour of Bismarck's policy. Thus even the more enlightened friends of Germany must be blamed for blindness, and for ignorance of reality. They were absorbed and misled, partly by the romantic idea of Germany, partly by Liberal tendencies, and partly, they also, by fear of France. 181

The British distrust of France centred in the nervous dread that France might attempt to annex Belgium; and this danger was regarded as a full justification of the feeling. But if/

if we consider the relative positions of France, Belgium
 83. and Britain at the time, was this morbid dread^v justifiable?
 Was it still necessary that Belgium should be the turning
 point for British policy in Europe? The days were gone
 when the Netherlands were the sole market for English trade
 and the policy of those days might have gone with them. As
 Dilke said later, why should it be more dangerous to Britain
 if France possessed Antwerp than if she possessed Cherbourg?¹⁸²
 Why we might ask in the light of to-day, was it more danger-
 ous that France should possess Antwerp than that Germany should
 possess Heligoland? Granted that it was dangerous that the
 84. Netherlands should be held by an enemy of Great Britain, still
 if some friendly support had been offered to France in 1830,
 it would have made France the sincere friend of Britain, and
 by satisfying her legitimate aims in Europe, would have made
 her less touchy and quarrelsome in the Mediterranean and
 Colonial questions.

It was the fashion in England to speak as if the¹⁸³
 desire of France to acquire Belgium was in itself reprehens-
 ible, but why should this be so? If the wish to unite all,
 sharing the same language, and in part the same blood and
 85. racial tradition, was praiseworthy in the case^v of Italy and
 Germany, it could not be condemned in^{that of} France. France would
 be quite unjustified in making a war to annex Belgium; but
 was it reasonable to say that if she made an arrangement to
 acquire the provinces peaceably, ~~that~~ this was wicked, immor-
 al/

immoral, and dangerous to Europe? In 1830 the inhabitants of the South Netherlands were, generally speaking, pleased at the idea of joining France. They had once already lived for a considerable time under French government, and no tradition of hostility divided them from France, as in the case of the Dutch. They were naturally eager to share all the advantages of belonging to one of the most powerful and civilised nations in Europe.

In 1830 Belgium was not ^{organic state} ~~a country~~, but a ^{mere} collection of provinces. By 1860 these provinces had made some progress towards a coherent individuality, and they had, therefore, become attached to their artificial independence, ^{and} ~~They would~~ certainly not have submitted without a struggle to a conquest by force, ¹⁸⁵ ~~but they would have looked with very different eyes upon a gradual and peaceful tightening of the ~~political~~ ties that already united them with the French nation in feeling and character.~~ During all this period, however, France ^{made} no threat to the independence of Belgium, ¹⁸⁶ in spite of the nervous horrors of King Leopold. France was anxious to keep on good terms with Britain, and she also began to see that, in the event of danger from the East, which seemed more and more probable, a neutral Belgium would be useful to her. This was the point which Great Britain failed to realise about the guarantee of neutrality. In the case of war between France and Germany, which was becoming more and more probable, it was Germany, and not France, that would see her interest in breaking/

88 breaking the guarantee. France had every interest in seeing that guarantee preserved, for a neutral Belgium covered her least defensible frontier and protected it from all attack; while Germany, in any attack on France, would find the Belgian railways and Belgian roads invaluable. ~~(This was obvious to any one who studied a map; but that is an employment not popular among Cabinet Ministers.)~~ On the other hand, if France wanted to attack Germany, ~~(she would prefer not to have a second enemy in the form of Great Britain, and so would be careful to respect the Belgian frontier.)~~ the strong fortifications where her frontier marched with Germany would be the best base of attack; and she would naturally wish to throw all her strength into the coveted Rhenish provinces, and seize and hold them. Germany at this time was so far removed from Great Britain, had so small a sea-coast, and so small a sea-borne trade, that she was almost invulnerable by Britain, and would be much less careful not to offend her: but France had a great mercantile fleet to protect, a long sea-coast exposed to British attacks, and if she were involved in a war with Germany, 187
 89. and Britain joined Germany, she would be caught between two enemies: so that France had much more interest than Germany in not provoking British enmity by violating the Belgian guarantee. 188

The real danger of a territorial guarantee, of course, is not that one of the guaranteeing powers should break it, but that only one should keep it. When there seemed to be, in 1870,

a possibility that France and Germany, with the tacit consent of Russia, might agree to repudiate the ~~Belgian Guarantee~~ Treaty, Great Britain felt herself helpless, and her representatives decided that in such a case she would not be bound
 91. to fight in^v defence of Belgium. (She would have fought, with Germany as an ally, to keep France out of Belgium: whether, at this date, she would have fought, with France^v as an ally, to keep Germany out of Belgium, is not quite so certain, for at a later date British statesmen publicly expressed sentiments that could be interpreted as meaning that in these circumstances they would not fight, and it is well known that the German government remained under this impression till the
 189
 90. final outbreak of war in 1914.)

(~~There seems to be considerable evidence, then, that~~
 92. ~~the policy of Britain in the Victorian period was dictated less by consideration for the interests of Belgium, than by the traditional distrust of France, a distrust not completely justifiable by facts.~~)

The various principles which directed British policy acted more or less strongly on individuals and on parties according to their temperament or to the circumstances of the moment. The wish for peace, for example, acted very strongly on Gladstone, and very^v slightly on Palmerston. John Russell was very sensitive to all these theories, and Disraeli was not greatly affected by any of them; except in so far as they
 190
 93. influenced him indirectly, through their hold^v on public opin-

opinion. There is a certain rough division of parties, however, which may be said to coincide with the influence of different classes of ideas.

On the whole, the power of idealism was greater, and more steadily exerted, over the Liberal Party than over the Conservative. The latter made some slight attempt to preserve the old traditional foreign policy: that Britain ~~should~~ take a bold part in the transaction of continental affairs, and that she was the chosen champion of the Balance of Power. The influence of this tradition acted intermittently, and not on all the Conservative leaders. The younger Derby, for example, steadily tended throughout his career towards a policy of non-intervention and peace; and he ended by joining the Liberals. The two greatest Conservative leaders, however, Disraeli and Salisbury, were neither of them of the normal English type, and were less affected by the ideas of the day. One was by race and character a foreigner, the other a peculiar and solitary nature, not in sympathy with the dominant tendencies of the age. Both were affected by these political ideals, but they were, on the whole, more empirical in their attitude, and more open to new impressions, than their Liberal contemporaries.

The ~~dis~~ The ideals which had most influence on the Conservatives were those which attached to the character and functions of particular states. The bulk of the party distrusted the Liberal movement abroad as too democratic, and Nationalism in their eyes was tarred with the same brush, though

they were eventually constrained to pay some lip-homage to both. Disraeli was quite ready to make a tool of democracy if he could do so, but the Jew had no sympathy with nationalism.

~~Highly~~ Derby on these points took more the typical Tory

96. view. Salisbury, perhaps the most original thinker of the leaders, was less independent and forcible in action than in thought.

The Liberals, on the other hand, were the true children of the new age, whose creed it was to interpret and give force to the desires and necessities of the new sovereign power---the English middle class. They were, therefore, most sensitive to the principles which expressed the views of that class---the wish for the maintenance of peace; for non-intervention in the affairs of other states; for the spread of the limited liberal constitutional system of English government, and for the success of the nationalist aspirations which ^{aroused} ^{ideal} roused sympathetic enthusiasm in that class. The policy of peace, though already felt in the days of Palmerston, gained immensely in strength as soon as his militant personality was removed from political circles. The Liberals, however, were influenced as much as ~~(if not more than)~~ the Conservatives by the traditional theories about Belgium, France, Germany, and Russia. This party was chiefly interested in home affairs, and found it much simpler ~~(nay, almost unavoidable)~~ to take their ideas of the condition of Europe ready-made. They were in this respect more prejudiced, more ignorant, and less open 98. to new ideas, than their political opponents.

For the full developement of the principles of peace and non-intervention, we must turn to what the Germans called "Manchesterthum." It was unfortunate that this ~~powerful and original school of politics~~ ^{party, so full of vitality + strength,} never actually directed the councils of the nation. It was always strong enough to influence the course of affairs, to act as a drag or a stimulus as the case might be, but it never obtained full control of the government or was in a position to apply its principles consistently over any considerable period. Its two greatest
 99. leaders felt this, and one always, ^v and the other for a long time, refused to hold office in any government.

The Manchester school was the only party that could have carried out a definite and original foreign policy. They may have been mistaken, but they had the courage of their convictions, and they did not shrink from consequences. Only in their hands could the principle of Non-Intervention have received its ^{complete} ~~full~~ application, because they were free from other prejudices ^v and other influences. They put peace before any other consideration whatsoever, and they ~~were~~ not trammelled by any considerations of self-interest, prejudice, or jealousy
 100. of ^v any particular foreign state. Under their guidance Britain would have taken up a position at least dignified and consistent, and would not have exposed herself to accusations of meddling, hypocrisy, cowardice, and greed. She would not have cringed to powerful states and bullied weak ones. She would not have broken an engagement with ~~an~~ Denmark and withdrawn from a threat to fight Germany, in the interests of peace; and

been ready to fight America and Russia, in the interests of commerce and imperialism.

As things stood, however, the Manchester school only
101. exerted enough influence to hinder or nullify any attempt on
the part of other parties at a more energetic policy, and
while they weakened the government at moments when strength
and resolution were needed, they failed to restrain it from
preaching and meddling. The death of Cobden in 1865, moreover,
deprived the party of the leader who had really given it its
strength and reputation.

Of the two leaders, Bright was the ~~less~~ original, the
more limited in outlook, and of the more prejudiced and rigid
mind. Cobden, on the other hand, had perhaps the ~~most~~ ^{strongest} powerful,
^{most} penetrating, and original intellect of any British statesman
102. of the Century. The two were equally disinterested; but Cobden
was far less fanatical than his friend. He admitted that at
times, though rarely, intervention might be justifiable, even
necessary, and while strongly condemning aggressive wars, he
was practical enough to advocate strong defences at the pres-
ent moment. But he would have no impudent meddling, and no
moral encouragement given to minorities abroad, when it was
not intended to give them material support. His opposition of
intervention had been consistent and bold. He had protested
against the Chinese opium wars, the Don Pacifico incident,
the quarrel with Japan, the Crimean War, and the encouragement
103. of Polish, Hungarian, and Italian revolutionaries. But he had

54) "I would, if necessary, spend one hundred millions sterling to maintain an irresistible superiority over France at sea." (to J. Russell, 2.8.60. Life (p. 501.)
Cobden)

with equal force¹ denounced the distinction made between different states, the friendly neutrality offered to the ambitions of one, and the jealous opposition made to similar plans on the part of others. He boldly told his countrymen that Britain had long been the most aggressive of states, and had no right to make accusations against her neighbours. In his first political writings he had tried to prove that civilisation and peace would both profit if Russia should acquire Constantinople, and that the old policy of opposing every Russian advance in the East² was wasteful and blind. In the same way he had protested against the persistent opposition to France, and in each of the War Scare³ had mocked at the prevailing excitement and deplored the "resolute and one-sided determination to throw all responsibility on our neighbours, to presume the worst, to construe everything in that sense, to take credit for perfect blamelessness." In the midst of the indignation in Britain at the annexation of Savoy and Nice, he had made his famous speech: "Perish Savoy!---though Savoy will not perish and will not suffer---rather than that the government of England be involved in enmity with the government and people of France in a matter in which we have no concern whatever." ⁵⁵

The principle of non-intervention, if consistently applied, might have led to ultimate disaster, but at least it was⁴

⁵⁵ ~~See~~ Morley's Cobden, p. 495. ⁵⁶ Speech, 2.3.60. ^{March}

a dignified and disinterested policy. Only the Manchester School was prepared to adopt it whole-heartedly and sincerely, and to apply it without prejudice. For this reason its leaders were respected abroad, even by those who disagreed with them, and Cobden was perhaps the only British statesman whose accession to power would have been hailed with applause in every foreign capital, for all knew, that though they might not hope for assistance from him, they would at least obtain justice.

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In this way the various parties, with their various motives and aims, saw grow up in Central Europe a new power which dominated and overshadowed the other states of Europe; a power against which, her own rulers admitted, she would be helpless in case of a struggle; a power whose commanding position had been built up by a deliberate violation of all the rules of public law and morality; a power whose domination rested, by her own confession, on force.

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This was a strange reflection for the Victorian idealists, with all their aspirations after prosperity, freedom, and peace.

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Chapter II.

THE SLESVIG-HOLSTEIN QUESTION, 1863-1864.

I.

The little nations of Scandinavia were living at this time in a state of calm and self-complacency which was not unwarranted. Here democracy was approaching, not, as in most of the states of Europe, in a series of violent convulsions; not complicated, as in Great Britain, by cruel industrial conditions, but with a natural, healthy, and gradual growth. Enjoying already a government superior to that of most of their neighbours; with a population simple and industrious, intelligent and patriotic; their rulers taking the first steps on a path of wise and moderate improvement; proud of their noble heritage of history and literature, and still basking in the autumn sunshine of a grand efflorescence of the arts; the three kingdoms regarded themselves with a natural satisfaction. Yet it was this northern civilization, so pleasing and so unaggressive, that was to be the first victim of the new gospel whose prophet, from his closet in Berlin, was now surveying the face of Europe.

There was a weak spot in the Scandinavian system, which for the last thirty years had hindered the progress of Denmark/

Denmark and drained her strength. The endless and vicious complications of "the Slesvig-Holstein Question" were ever² a trouble to the chancelleries of Europe, and at the moment when Bismarck became the first minister of Prussia, the problem had reached a point where it was ripe for (the) interference. (of a new hand). It was a clear case of the time and the place and the loved one all together: The Duchies were ready for Bismarck, when Bismarck was ready for them. Without entering into all the dreary controversies which maddened and bewildered the politicians of the day, it is necessary to take a rapid survey of the events which led up to this situation.

3. The Danish monarchy was a quadruple one: its³ sovereign was King of Denmark, Duke of Slesvig, Duke of Holstein, Duke of Lauenburg. The status of each of the four countries was different, and that of the three duchies was a matter of controversy. The case of Lauenburg may be taken first, as it was the simplest. It had been given to Denmark in 1815, as compensation for the cession of Swedish Pomerania to Prussia. The Danish title therefore rested on the Vienna Treaty, and Lauenburg followed the Danish Crown. Its inhabitants were German, and it was a member of the German Con-
 4. federation. It was an endearingly placid little duchy, perfectly satisfied with Danish rule, but attaching itself contentedly/

contentedly to Germany when transferred. We may dismiss it with a blessing.

Over the position of Slesvig and Holstein controversy has raged for nearly a century. So inextricably complicated is the legal and political history of the duchies, that either side could make out an excellent case simply by emphasizing certain facts and slurring over others. There is, however, one point which has never been contested; from its first existence, Slesvig was a fief of the Danish Crown, while Holstein was a fief of the Holy Roman Empire.

Slesvig was originally⁵ an integral part of Jutland, and was separated from it, and created a fief of the crown, in the 13th century. In the next century the Counts of Holstein, by intermarriage, succeeded to the Duchy of Slesvig, and when, nearly a hundred years later, the Holstein family became extinct, Slesvig escheated to the Danish crown, and the King of Denmark^{Christian I} inherited the lordship of Holstein, which he continued to hold as a fief of the Empire.

In 1721 the whole of Slesvig was incorporated into the Danish crown, and guaranteed by France and Britain. In 1806 the Holy Roman Empire ceased to exist, and the King of Denmark declared Holstein an allodial possession of the Danish Crown. In 1815, however, the new German Confederation was formed, and the King of Denmark joined it for the Duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg. The aggressive spirit shown by Prussia had alarmed him, and he hoped to protect his German provinces from attack by joining the Confederation himself: but the consequences of the step were disastrous for Denmark.

Its immediate result was the first formulation of the "Schleswig-Holstein theory." The laws of the German Confederation obliged its members to give their subjects a constitution---an obligation which most of them ignored. The King of Denmark at this time was Frederick VI, the kindly old autocrat whose flaming heart makes one of the Danish Nine in Andersen's tale, and who, though very unwilling to limit his own authority, immediately began to frame a constitution for Holstein. He was, however, under no obligation to give one to Slesvig or to Denmark Proper, and did not intend to do so. From this sprang more than one result. On the one hand, the Liberals of Slesvig were anxious to share the constitutional government of Holstein. On the other, the nobility of both duchies were seriously alarmed. Between the nobles of Slesvig and Holstein existed a connection known as the "nexus socialis," consisting of certain private privileges, chiefly rights over some conventual property. They were alarmed lest the severance of the government of Holstein

from that of the rest of the monarchy might interfere with the "nexus socialis", and also lest it might lessen their political influence, which had hitherto been supreme. The Equestrian Order employed as paid secretary Dahlmann, a Mecklenburger, a professor at the University of Kiel, who exhumed from the archives of the Duchies a charter, granted in 1460 by Christian^I I to ~~the~~ ⁹ Slesvig and Holstein. This document stated that Slesvig was to have a Diet of her own, her own system of Jutish law, and that only native Slesvigiers were to hold high office; Holstein was also to have her own Diet, her own German law-code, and was to be administered by a native Holsteiner. They were to have a common council and regent, and they were to "remain forever together undivided." ¹⁰ This enigmatic clause, according to Dahlmann, established an "indissoluble tie" between the two Duchies. It is possible, however, that ¹¹ it was intended to mean only that ¹⁰ neither of the provinces was to be cut up into smaller fiefs, which were disliked, as conducing to feuds and disorder. Certainly, as they were to have separate Diets, distinct codes of law, and separate administrations, it is difficult to see in what the "indissoluble tie" could consist, as the mere fact of the common council and regent hardly constituted one.

But whatever the meaning of the clause, one thing is certain: it was never observed. Slesvig and Holstein for several centuries led a Protean sort of life, divided in every possible

¹¹ ①

Or "forever both of them undivided."---"ewich tosanende ungedelt."

way, halved, quartered, and criss-crossed: but only once, for 11. the space of a few years, did they find themselves "tosamende ungedelt."

The second document on which Dahlmann's Schleswig-Holstein Theory was based was the so-called Constitution of Valdemar, which contained the expression, "Item Ducatus Sunderjutiae (Slesvig) regno et coronae non uniatur nec annectetur ita quod unus sit dominus utriusque." Of this document it need only be said that it does not exist, and that the only evidence that it ever existed is a reference in a letter written a century later: that this "Valdemar" was a usurper who dispossessed the rightful 12. king, was a child under age, and is not usually included in the list of authentic Danish kings: and that, even with all respect to Valdemar, his constitution was by the 19th century a little out of date, as it only stated that Denmark and Slesvig should not have one lord, and since 1713 one lord had reigned in both, recognised by the native Slesvigers, by the concert of Europe, and by Germany itself.

Nevertheless Dahlmann held that he had succeeded in proving that Slesvig and Holstein were united by an indissoluble tie, connected with Denmark Proper only by a personal union, and that 13. to grant a constitution to Holstein and not to Slesvig would be a violation of the indissoluble tie. The formal re-union of Slesvig to the Danish Crown in 1713 was a difficulty, but Dahlmann got over it by simply denying that this incorporation was legal.

The opposition of the nobles would probably have come to

little; but Dahlmann's theory was eagerly seized upon by the Liberals, as it gave an opportunity to obtain representative institutions for both duchies. The Charter of 1460 was disinterred from the dust of four hundred years, ardent professors vainly ransacked the Archives for the mythical "constitution of Valdemar," and the Liberal party in Germany took up the cause of their brothers in the North. 14

These Teutonic necromancers, in this raising the ghosts of the past, would have been highly annoyed if their opponents had followed their example. Had the Danish government proposed to revive the provision of the Charter of 1460, that only native Slesvigers might hold office in Slesvig, and dismissed the crowd of German and Holstein officials who flourished there

~~Crowd of German and Holstein officials who flourished there,~~
 the Schleswig-Holstein party would have been seriously dis-
 pleased. Again, ¹⁴if ~~feudal law was to be observed,~~ ^{Holstein were, as they claimed} the Letters
 Patent of 1806 to be declared invalid, and Holstein to be

23. ^van independent state, she would have to be an independent
 state mulcted of Altona and about one-fifth of her present
 territory, for these districts were allodial possessions
 of the Danish Crown, and had only been joined to the old
 duchy of Holstein by ~~these Letters of~~ ^{Letters Patent of 1806} ~~1806.~~ ⁱⁿ This also would
 have seriously displeased the followers of Dahlmann. (And
 as will be seen later, the German revival of feudal laws
 had other logical consequences not more agreeable to them-
 selves.) The fact that none of these consequences were ever
 seriously considered by either side serves to prove the
24. artificiality of the Schleswig-Holsteiner ^vParty's contention.
 Since 1460, the map of Europe had been re-modelled; new
 states had ^varisen and old ones vanished; the balance of ^{16.}
 power had shifted; Denmark herself had changed her whole
 nature, and been transformed from a hybrid ~~elective~~-feudal
 monarchy into an absolute hereditary one. When every state
 in Europe was consolidating her position and discarding the
 trammels of the past, why should Denmark be bound by obsolete
 mediaeval/

mediaeval restraints?

23 → The Danish kings, however, did not take up this position. The controversy was still in its infancy, they did not regard it as a serious danger, and their policy for nearly thirty years was dictated by dynastic, not national, interests. True, Frederick VI, in a rage at the opposition, scrapped the constitution which he had just signed, and continued to govern all his dominions absolutely; but both he and his successors were ready to make large concessions to keep the Schleswig-Holstein party content. Several administrative connections between the two duchies were established, and Denmark Proper paid more than her share of taxes that their burdens might be lessened. Efforts to spread the German language among the Danes of Slesvig were countenanced. The whole duchies were 17. monarchy was prosperous and well-governed, and the kings, Frederick VI. and Christian VIII, dreaded the German support of Schleswig-Holsteinism the less as it was of a wholly 18. private nature. It was confined to the Liberals, and the Diet of the Confederation, which represented only the various governments, had definitely repudiated Schleswig-Holsteinism. When the theory was first formulated, the Holsteiners had appealed to the German Diet, complaining that the Charter of 1460 had been violated, and in the light of future events the/

the reply of the Diet should be carefully noted. The claim was dismissed, on the ground that "the alleged Constitution of 1460 was not existing in acknowledged vigour," and the representative of Prussia declared emphatically that "Slesvig does not belong to German^{ly} federal territories" and that therefore the Diet had 19. no right to discuss any question bearing on Slesvig. This was in 1823. In 1830 the obligations of Denmark towards Holstein were fulfilled, and consultative representative institutions were established in all four parts of the monarchy---the two duchies, Jutland, and the isles.

There was another influence than that of Liberalism, which had already played some part in the question of the duchies, and which from this time forward began to dominate the situation. This was the rise of Nationalism as a political factor.

From 1850 to 1830, the desire for a[✓] strong, united Germany, 20. that could take her proper place in the Councils of Europe, slowly spread and grew stronger among the German people. Only in the little selfish absolute governments, each playing for its own hand, it obtained no influence. It was closely associated with the Liberal aspirations which the Confederated governments desired to repress; while Prussia, and still

still more Austria, each holding subject races by the strong hand, dared not trifle with the idea of nationalism. Met-
 30. ternich dominated the Confederation, and Metternich's policy was, by waging war on Nationalism and Liberalism, to suppress for the time the revolution which he regarded as inevitable²¹ in the end. The smooth old trickster was too much attached to the ways of the past century to attempt to control the new spirit and use it for his own ends as a stronger man was afterwards able to do.

The Germans of Holstein naturally shared the aspirations of their fellows; they were eager to strengthen the tie that bound them to the Confederation, and, with the aggressive spirit common to 19th century Nationalists, they
 31. were eager to impose German culture upon Danish Slesvig.²² For, as the aims of Germany became more definite and distinct, Slesvig became more and more the centre of interest. Germany needed more than a strong central government: for what would be the position of a united Germany, with no navy and only a few miles of sea-board? What use were the Pomeranian ports if Denmark held the key to the Baltic, and dominated Hanover and Frisia? Liberal Germany looked with avid eyes upon the peninsular coast, with its excellent harbours East and West,
 32. and above all, the jewel of the Baltic, Kiel. The supposed connection/

connection of Slesvig with Holstein took on a new importance. ~~By all means let us encourage the Schleswig-Holsteiners! they are treading the right road.~~ 23.

The German governments made no effort to throw cold water on these hopes. They were not so destitute of patriotism as not to appreciate the gain to German sea-power if Slesvig were to join the Confederation; and besides, the matter could be used as a safety-valve for National-liberal enthusiasm: the more the opposition was occupied with Schleswig-Holstein, the less time and attention had it to spare for
33. revolution at home.

The French revolution of 1830 gave a great impetus to German propaganda in the duchies. But national feeling was not confined to Germany; and 1830 had its effect also upon Denmark. The two races came to grips in Slesvig. 24.

The population of Slesvig had been originally pure Danish, with a slight sprinkling of Frisians, but for 400 years the Dukes of Gottorp and other potentates who ruled over the whole or part of the duchy were Germans, and they had imposed upon it a superficial German culture. They encouraged immigration; they appointed German bishops and
34. pastors; ~~who preached German sermons to pious but puzzled Danish congregations~~ they filled the administration with German/

~~(1) German was made the official language in 1326 by the then Count, and had been continued by his successors, many of whom, it will be recollected, were Germans. Holsteiners.~~

German officials, and made an education at the purely German university of Kiel the necessary qualification for every important post. ⁽¹⁾ By this time almost the whole of the nobility of Slesvig, and most of the southern districts, were German in speech, and to some extent in feeling. As the members of the Diet were drawn from the noble, official, and professional classes, the Danish peasantry of the north and middle districts, who formed the majority of the inhabitants, could not make their voice heard in it, and this fact explains the generally anti-Danish policy of the Slesvig Diet.

Shortly after 1830, however, the Danes of Denmark Proper began to realise that a systematic attempt was being made to rob them of their fairest province. The government, it is true, still ignored the grievances of Danish Slesvig; but by private efforts the "Slesvig Association", whose object was to counteract German propaganda, was formed, and soon succeeded in re-introducing the Danish language into about 120 parishes in which it had been abolished within the last five years. Dahlmann found an antagonist in Orla Lehmann, a Slesviger, and an agitation was begun to make the Diet more/

(1) Of course this was not always effective. Christian Paulsen, the Danish leader, was a Flensburger, with a German mother, and brought up in a German-speaking household, who as a boy taught himself Danish in order, when playing soldiers to give the orders in Danish; he wrote: "In spite of my purely German education I have always declared myself Danish, because I have always felt myself Danish, and I can never remember to have thought myself otherwise at any moment of my life." A fine example of how patriotic feeling is independent of race or language.

more fairly representative.*

Towards the end of his reign Christian VIII made a personal tour in Slesvig, and discovered that he had been entirely misled as to the character and feelings of the population. He altered his policy, and for his last years de- 27. finitely favoured the effort of the patriotic Danish party—now becoming known as the "Eider-Danes", from their declared aim of a united Danish land with the Eider for its frontier.

By this time the attitude of the German states, also, was changing. So powerful had the national-liberal 37. movement become, that it could not fail to have some slight effect even upon the most reactionary of the governments. The issue, therefore, became a clear one. On one side, the German nationalists/

* NOTE on the NATIONALITY of SLESVIG. Consul Ward reported on this point to the British Government in 1863. He made investigations in some of the middle districts, and, though himself an ardent Slesvig-Holsteiner, was obliged to admit that though the younger people spoke German by preference, the older generation spoke bad German and good Danish, but were ashamed of speaking Danish, as they had been taught that it was vulgar. Ward drew from this the conclusion that the Danish Government was quite unjustified in maintaining that these districts were Danish in blood. But it certainly proves that the Germanization was very recent; the older generation had never been able to acquire the German which their children had been taught at school. Even in the southern districts, the population must have been largely Danish in blood, and could easily have been reclaimed. It must be remembered that the "German" speech of South Slesvig was not modern high German, but a mixed low German dialect. A typical example of German methods in Slesvig, after the Danish government had put a stop to more crudely forcible methods, was that the Diet of Slesvig offered extra pay to every school-teacher who would give his classes German lessons.

nationalists wished to draw Slesvig into the German Confederation. On the other, the Eider-Danes^v wished to in-^{28.} corporate it with Denmark, and in order to do this were ready even to abandon Holstein if necessary. The significance of the "Schleswig-Holstein Theory" was obvious; in the hands of the German party, it could be used to sever Slesvig from Denmark and unite her to Germany. The ~~offered~~^{possession} ~~concession~~ of
 38. ~~the Danes - the cession~~^v of Holstein ~~alone~~^{alone} had no attraction for Germany, for it left her without control of Kiel.

Ill-fortune attended Denmark, for at this point matters were complicated by a disputed succession to the Crown, as intricate and doubtful as every other aspect of the ^vquestion. ^{29.}

The royal house was dying out. The only son of King Christian had been twice married and twice divorced, and was childless. He had now formed a private connection with a third lady, and absolutely refused another royal marriage. After his death, who should succeed?

~~The sovereignty, both of Denmark and of the duchies~~
 39. ~~had originally been elective. At different dates in the~~
~~first half of the 17th century the various sovereignties~~
~~were all made hereditary.~~

The succession to the Danish crown had originally run in the male line only, but by the introduction of a law known/

known as the "Lex Regia", it had been extended to female heirs. This law only referred to Denmark Proper. Now the heir in the female line was Prince Christian of Glücksburg, grandson^v of 30. the Landgrave of Hesse and great-grandson of Frederick VI of Denmark. (~~His claim was derived from his mother, who, with the other princes of Hesse, had resigned all her rights to him.~~) Prince Christian was indisputably heir in the direct female line to the crown of Denmark^v But was he also heir to Slesvig and Holstein? The Schleswig-Holstein party contended that in the duchies the male succession only obtained, and that the rightful heir was the Duke of Augustenburg, a Holstein ^{noted} prince descended from John, younger son of Christian III of Denmark.

They contended that, on the death of Frederick VII, Christian should become King of Denmark, while the Duchies would separate from the Danish crown and be ruled by the Duke of Augustenburg as independent Duke^{sovereign}.

Whether or not the male succession^v obtained in 31. Holstein depends on the status of that duchy as a fief of the Holy Roman Empire, ^{and} can only be settled by antiquarians. For the sake of simplicity we may accept the German view in this case. The matter of Slesvig, however, was much more complicated. The Danes maintained that the law of succession in/

in Slesvig had been assimilated to that of Denmark, when Slesvig was annexed to the Crown in 1721. It was indubitable that both the Slesvig Estates, and the Duke of Augustenburg of the day, had taken the oath of allegiance to the King of ^{✓ 32} Denmark, swearing, "to remain faithful and obedient to him and his Royal hereditary successors, secunde tenorem legis regiae". The Schleswig-Holsteiners contended that this was not sufficient to alter the law in Slesvig; the Danes held that it was, and as it was impossible for either party to prove the exact significance attributed to the words by the persons who employed them in 1721, they came to a deadlock.

But even granting that both duchies had the male succession, the Augustenburg claim was not proved. The sovereignty of Denmark ^{was originally elective and} had only been made hereditary ^{in Denmark proper} in the ⁴³ year 1660. Primogeniture had been introduced in the ~~Gettorp~~ ^{Slesvig and Holstein a little before this.} ~~duchies in 1608, and in the Royal Duchies in 1660.~~ The Augustenburg line, however, had parted from the royal house in the 16th century, and its first representative had died in 1564, a considerable time before any part of the monarchy had become hereditary. ²⁾ Slesvig, as a male fief of the Crown, would on the extinction of the male line of Frederick III, escheat to the Crown; ^{and} Holstein, now that the Empire no longer existed, would most probably do the same; ~~and by the extinction of the male/~~

2) See Genealogical Table p. .

male descendants of Christian VII, the Russian claims on Holstein - Gottorp would automatically revive, though not the claims on Slesvig, as Russia had resigned the latter to "the heirs of the Danish crown", not merely the male heirs.

The artificial nature of the Augustenburg claim, however, did not prevent the ^{ch}Sleswig-Holstein Party and the German nationalists from supporting it. The ^{ch}Sleswig-Holsteiners saw in it an opportunity of strengthening the connection between the duchies; the Germans saw a chance of detaching Slesvig from Denmark.

The King of Denmark in whose reign the claim was first made, Christian VIII, did not at first take ^{it}the claim seriously. He had loaded the Augustenburg family with benefits, and believed they were loyal to the Crown. It determined him, however, to settle the question of the succession, and put an end to discussion. ^{A little later} At this moment he discovered that Augustenburgs had systematically deceived him as to the condition of Slesvig, ^{and} He decided to act at once. In 1846 ^{he}Christian VIII issued Letters Patent, declaring Slesvig inseparable from Denmark; and ^{saying} that as the case of Holstein was doubtful, an arrangement should be made so that it might not be separated from the rest of the monarchy.

Then the storm, so long gathering, broke.

(Germans on)

25
No N. P. here~~It broke in a~~ ^{First cause}

46. ~~It broke in a~~ shower of protests, from all the remotest relatives of the royal house - Augustenburg, Oldenburg, Glücksburg.³⁾ Holstein petitioned against the Letters Patent, and the Danish lion, now rampant indeed, put aside the law and refused to receive the petition. Holstein complained to the German Diet that her rights were violated and the constitution overridden. The Diet, roused from its perennial doze, drowsily rebuked her frowardness, and sent a polite protest about the refused petition to Copenhagen, Denmark, encouraged, went further; abolished the newly-invented "Schleswig-Holstein Flag", dismissed a few high officials, in Slesvig, and accepted the resignation of Augustenburg's brother;⁴⁾ but her difficulties were only beginning.

47. At the opening of 1848, two events occurred which changed the face of affairs. Christian VIII died, and the divorced, Frederick VII, ascended the throne. (By two qualities the new king endeared himself to his subjects - he was much more Danish in feeling than his father, and he was a Liberal ~~in principle~~)^{57.} and wished to give his people a large measure of self-government. The late king had left prepared a new constitution, which was intended to conciliate and reconcile the/

3) Prince Christian of Glücksburg repudiated his father's protest, and acknowledged the King's right to settle the succession.

4) The Prince of Noer, who had been Governor-General in Slesvig.

the various sections of the state. It preserved to the provinces their local assemblies, and established a ^{central} parliament ^{with} ^v common to the whole monarchy, having a deliberative vote on finance, law, and police. Holstein and Slesvig had between them 26 members in this Rigsdag, and Denmark Proper 26. Frederick VII signed and published the constitution in January, 1848.

It pleased no one. Holstein ^v instantly declared it ³⁸ an attempt to incorporate herself and Slesvig, while the Eider-Danes said that the German minority was given an unfair preponderance in national affairs by the distribution of seats in the Rigsdag. Probably the opposition would soon have subsided had outside events not interfered: but in February the Paris Revolution set all Europe ablaze. Governments ^v were overturned, and busy and excited parliaments sprang up ⁴⁹ like mushrooms; the astonished world saw Metternich a refugee in England and Mazzini supreme in Rome. ("The Revolution" had its little heyday)

(In the Danish question a triple change took place)

In Copenhagen, national feeling became irresistible, and the Eider-Danes ^v carried their policy; Holstein sprang into rebellion; and in Frankfort, the ruling power was no longer the moribund Diet, but a new "national assembly" of the hot/ ³⁹

hot-headed devotees of the Liberal-National party, all crying aloud that their German brothers be delivered from the Danish yoke.

50. Holstein made the first move. The deputies of the two duchies were called to meet at Rendsburg, and about 60 of the total 92 actually assembled, and submitted the following demands to the King:-

1. That the estates of Slesvig and Holstein be immediately convoked to decide on a constitution for a united Schleswig-Holstein.
2. That Slesvig immediately enter the German Confederation 40.
3. That the people of the duchies be armed, electing their own officers.
4. A free press, and other constitutional rights.

These demands left Rendsburg on March 21st, and it was possible to expect a reply by the 24th. But without 51. waiting for this, on the 23rd, the Prince of Noer and a few others constituted themselves into a revolutionary Provisional Government, and sent off a request to Prussia for armed assistance against Denmark.

Meantime, on March 22nd, the inhabitants of Copenhagen had presented a petition to the king, asking for a change of ministry. The king consented. The ministers resigned, 41. and were succeeded by a more democratic cabinet, ~~with Count Moltke at its head.~~ To this fell the duty of replying to the/

the Schleswig-Holstein demands. It promised that Slesvig should receive a democratic constitution, and that Denmark would give her loyal support to the new Frankfort Assembly §2. in its effort to establish a united Liberal Germany, while Holstein should be an independent German federal state; but it absolutely refused to allow Slesvig to enter the German Confederation, and pronounced her indissolubly united to Denmark.

By the time this reply reached Rendsburg, Holstein was in insurrection. The Holsteiners themselves did not admit this; they declared that they were not in rebellion, but were defending the king, who was acting under constraint, against "the Copenhagen insurgents", and the change of ministry, (which had taken place without so much as a broken window), was immediately christened by the Germans "the Copenhagen §3. Revolution". We may suppose that the King of Denmark was scarcely grateful to his loyal Holsteiners, when a Prussian army crossed his frontiers, and the Diet passed a resolution incorporating Slesvig with Germany. Slesvig, herself thanked her neighbour for nothing; the peasant conscripts joined their Danish units without orders, often bringing with them as prisoners the Germanophil officials who had tried to prevent them.

It is not needful to give a detailed account of the war/

war. The Prussians and Holsteiners together largely outnumbered the Danes, overran Slesvig, and even invaded Jutland. Denmark, however, appealed to the European powers, and under 54- pressure^v from Russia and Great Britain, Prussia consented to an armistice, and finally - after the Danish fleet had blockaded her coast - to a peace. The rebels, though still supplied with Prussian munitions and led by Prussian officers, were now quickly swept out of Slesvig. But Denmark could not follow up her victory by a descent into Holstein, for the 44- peace treaty with Prussia had included a clause by which Denmark bound herself⁵⁾ to apply to the German Confederation to restore order in Holstein, instead of doing so herself. 26- (Not a Danish soldier dared cross the frontier.)

55- This flung the unfortunate little state into a whole series of new difficulties. She could not pacify Holstein herself, and several months elapsed before she could induce the German Powers to move. At length a mixed force of Prussians and Austrians entered Holstein to restore order. Possibly they did so. But once in, the difficulty was to get them out again. They settled down comfortably in the duchy, and refused to stir until Denmark gave her consent to 45- certain demands which they pressed upon her.

These/

5) It seems certain that the expression 'pourra réclamer' in the treaty was understood as implying an absolute obligation on the part of Denmark. See G.A. Gosch, Denmark and Germany since 1815, Appendix.

These events had occupied some three years, and during this time, the political situation had gradually changed. 56. The premature and feverish outbreak of liberal^vism in Germany had subsided: the liberal leaders had shown themselves uncertain and incapable. The National Assembly gradually faded out of existence, in the manner of the Cheshire Cat, leaving, not its grin but its voice, to the last. Soon reaction was in full swing. The old governments were restored in every state, and in this St. Martin's Summer of absolutism, the leadership of Germany fell naturally into the hands of the arch-tyrant, Austria. Prussia, having brought herself into universal contempt by her irresolution and selfishness, fell into the background. Thus chance had brought Denmark face 46. (to 57. face^v with a new protagonist. Austria had had no original concern with the Holstein revolt, and the demands she now made curiously differ from, and still more curiously resemble, those of the German nationalists.

Austria, of course, did not care a straw about the nationalist aspirations of Holstein, and it is not to be supposed that her cultured and intelligent statesmen had any 47. illusions about the nature of the "indissoluble tie". But Austria was intensely interested as to the form of government to be established in the two duchies. Denmark had now one of the/

58. the most liberal constitutions in Europe, and it was all-
important for Austria to prevent this constitution from
being re-extended to the duchies. A German population, on
the very frontiers of the Confederation, enjoying all the
privileges of a free and democratic government, would be a
pernicious example to the German states, where despotism had
been restored. Austria's traditional policy was the negation
of liberalism, and she^v could never permit this. 48.

Denmark, in the meantime, was very unpleasantly
placed. The other great powers were tired of the matter,
and would not listen to her complaints. She had just emerged
59. from a war that had lasted several years. One of her provinces^v
was occupied by foreign troops, and she was deprived of all
its revenues. It was, in addition to this, absolutely neces-
sary for her to obtain the consent of the powers to some
settlement of the succession to the throne. In the circum-
stances, therefore, Austria and Prussia (for the latter now
followed in Austria's^v train) were able literally to starve 49.
her into submission to their demands.

The Austro-Danish negotiations, together with the
treaty afterwards signed at London, ended the first phase of
the Slesvig Holstein Question. All legal and political con-
60. troversies were swept aside, and a new^v and definite foundation
for/

for future developement was laid. It is then necessary to understand clearly what the settlement of 1852 was.

It was double in character: it consisted, first, of the private arrangements made between Denmark and the German powers, which were not embodied in any official document, but existed only in the form of dispatches exchanged between the respective governments; and second, of the Treaty of London, an authentic international engagement and part of the public law of Europe. 50.

The significant portion of the Austro-Danish correspondence is dated December, 1851, and January, 1852. Denmark first expresses her intention of taking certain steps to oblige her "high allies", as the German powers are euphemistically termed. She undertakes:-

1. To govern Slesvig and Holstein absolutely, with the assistance of their Estates, until a representative constitution for the whole monarchy be prepared, again with the assistance of the estates of each province.)
2. Not to incorporate Slesvig.
3. To preserve the "nexus socialis", etc., intact.) 61.
4. To abolish the administrative connection between Slesvig and Holstein, so far as it existed before 1848.)
5. All this will only be done on condition that "the Federal Diet abstains from any and every pretension to an authority over or in regard to the Danish Crownland Slesvig".) 62.

6. Details of the proposed constitution are given. The navy, customs, and post office, War, Finance, and Foreign Affairs, are to be in the hands of ministers for common affairs, responsible to the King or the Rigsdag; certain local financial, commercial, and legal affairs, are to be in the hands of a minister for Slesvig and of another for Holstein. 52.

24 Austria's reply commences with some fatherly advice.

She is "of opinion that a plan of organization, overburdened with representative estates and with ministerial responsibility

63. - would cause no less - nay, perhaps much greater difficulties to the Government". She goes on to say that she expects the King of Denmark "to preserve, by appropriate arrangements, to all the various parts of the country, the portion which belongs to them as members of a whole, in which no part is subordinated to another". She demands "the maintenance of separate political and administrative institutions in the different parts of the country, without prejudice to the combined government of common affairs in the centre". She hopes "that the Danish Government will perhaps not give an exclusive preference to those institutions which have been
64. bestowed upon the kingdom of Denmark Proper in recent years" - i.e., the new democratic constitution of Denmark must not be used as a model for the proposed general constitution. If Denmark will accept her version of the Danish offers, Austria will sign the Treaty of London, guarantee the Danish Succession, and/ 53.

and evacuate Holstein. She then states how she interprets^v 54. the Danish despatch. She agrees to most of the details, and in particular she consents to the complete separation of Slesvig and Holstein. She approves the intention of preserving the provincial estates, and of establishing an "organic and homogeneous" constitution for common affairs. All her⁶⁵ concern^v is that this constitution shall not be of a too Liberal nature.*⁶⁾

Denmark accepted the Austrian dispatch; and it was thereupon assented to by Prussia, and by the German Diet in a federal resolution. Holstein was evacuated, and Austria and Prussia signed the Treaty of London.

The Treaty of London had reference only to^v the 55. Danish succession. By it the great powers recognised the integrity of the Danish monarchy as a necessary constituent of the balance of power in Europe, and recognised as heir Prince Christian of Glücksburg. This gentleman was the only⁶⁶ candidate remaining in the field. The heirs^v in the female line, the house of Hesse, had resigned their pretensions in his favour, and the Duke of Augustenburg had forfeited what rights he ever had by his share in the Holstein rebellion. As a precaution, he also was induced to resign his claim, the statesman who conducted the negotiations with him being⁶⁶ Otto/

⁶⁾* Prussia assented to these views, laying particular emphasis on the last point.

Otto von Bismarck. Augustenburg was generously treated: though his Danish estates were forfeit through his treason, he received the sum of £400,000 as compensation, and in return he declared: "We moreover promise, for ourself and our family, by our princely word and honour, not to undertake anything whereby the tranquillity of His Majesty's dominions and lands might be disturbed nor in any way to counteract the resolutions which His Majesty might take in reference to the...succession of all the lands united under His Majesty's sceptre, or to the eventual organisation of his monarchy."⁷⁾

The Treaty of London was signed[✓] by six German states--- 57.
Austria, Prussia, Hanover, Saxony, Wurtemberg, and Electoral Hesse. Bavaria, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Mecklenburg, and Saxe-Weimar refused to sign. The Diet was not invited to do so.

Immediately afterwards the King of Denmark abolished the "Lex Regia," assimilated the law of succession in Denmark Proper to that of the Duchies, and declared Prince Christian of Slesvig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg his heir.

7) Six years after the money had been paid over, the Duke's two sons protested against the renunciation, and declared that as they had been of age at the time the words "our family" did not include them. There can be no doubt, however, that in 1852 the European powers regarded the Duke's engagement as a definite renunciation of all claim to the succession, binding on himself and all his descendants, and that his sons must have been aware that it was so understood.

II.

It has been seen from this account that the settlement of 1852 made no attempt to grapple with the real difficulty of the situation. The succession was only one part of the Danish question, but it was the only one to which⁵⁸ reference was made in the Treaty of London. Apart from this, the position of the duchies was left unchanged, and all the vicious anomalies of the past were preserved. Holstein still held the double position of a German and a Danish territory, and the German Confederation still had the right of meddling with Denmark's internal affairs. In one respect, matters were changed for the worse: Denmark was now under an obligation towards Germany with regard, not only to German Holstein, but to the purely Danish province of Slesvig.

The reactionary and unimaginative character of⁵⁹ the London Treaty is surprising when it is remembered that the same mind was responsible for both this treaty and that which had created Belgium a few years before. Though the London Treaty was actually signed by Lord Malmesbury, it embodied

embodied the policy of the late Russell-Palmerston government. But the moods of Palmerston were incalculable. From the beginning he had found the Danish question a bore. ⁸⁾ He was enjoying himself too much, writing indiscreet letters to France and quarrelling with Prince Albert, to have time to spare for that dull and troublesome Baltic problem. The quickest way to settle things was to finish off this stupid succession affair, and for the rest - magic word to English ears! - compromise! There have been far too many territorial changes in Europe lately; we can't have the atlas turned topsy-turvy. ⁶⁰

Every earnest and unbiassed observer could by this time see that there was only one solution that had any chance of success; to use the surgeon's knife. Definitely to separate the duchies: to give Holstein in full sovereignty to the German Confederation and allow Denmark in return a free hand to incorporate Slesvig and reclaim its partly Germanized population - in 1852 this might have ended the quarrel. There were still ten years to run before the new statesmanship began its course in Prussia, and in those ten years, with all friction removed, Denmark and Germany might have become resigned to the situation. Without the spirit of German nationalism, and the private agreement of 1852, as his/ ⁶¹

8) See the curious tale in Malmesbury's "Memoirs of an ex-Minister", p. 181-2.

his tools, Bismarck would have found it a harder matter to force a war on Denmark, and harder yet to make Austria act with him.

28 ~~(Was such a solution possible? The Eider-Danes had few illusions, and would not have hesitated at so desperate a remedy; they could have forced their policy on the king. Germany would have been ready enough to accept Holstein, and no vestige of excuse to meddle with Danish affairs would have been left to her. Nationalism would have no grievance left to feed on, and greedy imperialism no rag left to cover its nakedness.)~~

The opportunity to settle the Danish question by international arbitration was lost: but Denmark was left determined to settle it for herself. While the government of the day made an honest attempt to cope with the situation as it stood, and fulfil the engagements contracted towards Germany, there was growing up among the people a deep conviction that the state of affairs was intolerable, and must be ended at all costs. Had Germany loyally accepted the loyal endeavours of the Danish government, that government might have succeeded in carrying its policy through in spite of popular opinion: but on the contrary, the one object of Germany and of the Holsteiners was to hinder and to counter-act the ^{Danish} efforts ~~of that government~~. They had no desire for

a/ 62. 63.

a peaceful settlement in the duchies. They wanted to keep the raw wound open, that at any fortunate moment they might have excuse to cry again, that the ^{Swedish} blade be their arbiter.

The first proceeding of the Holstein estates was not encouraging. Holstein, like Germany, was experiencing a reaction, and the estates passed a resolution affirming that the only way to obtain satisfactory results was to re-introduce absolute government in all parts of the monarchy. ⁹⁾ ~~This curious proceeding almost unparalleled in history - save in the notorious case of Marjorie Daw.~~ The Danish government, however, if it owed a duty to Germany, owed one also to the Danish people, and the helpful suggestion of Holstein was ⁶⁴ not adopted.

The administration of Denmark was now in an extraordinary condition. The original very democratic constitution was in force in Denmark Proper, whereas the duchies had lapsed ⁷⁷ to the old law of 1831. Thus it happened that the government consisted of three ministers for Denmark Proper, who were responsible only to the Rigsdag; a minister for Slesvig and one for Holstein, responsible only to the King; and four ministers for common affairs, responsible both to the King and to the Rigsdag. Denmark was therefore quite as anxious as ⁶⁵ Germany could be to establish the common constitution agreed/

^{9/16} "The Germans in the Duchies could have lived long & happily under the sceptre of a Danish king, but it was impossible that they should submit for any length of time to the decisions of a Danish parliament." (H. von Moltke to his brother. Letters Vol. IV.)

agreed upon. But many difficulties stood in the way. For example, it had been promised that the new constitution should be drawn up with the help of the provincial estates: 78. but the estates of the duchies had only the consultative rights granted in 1831, while the kingdom had a deliberative right under the last constitution, and thus would have had a very unfair advantage. Again, it would have been almost impossible to get the Liberal Riksdag of the kingdom to curtail its new freedom, and yet that must be done, if the constitution was to please Austria. It was therefore deter- 66. mined, after several failures, to ignore the estates, and to prepare a constitution without their assistance. In 1855 the final draft was ready. It left the provincial estates much as they were, except that it gave them a deliberative 79. vote on the points where they already had a consultative vote. Church, education, justice, and certain financial matters were completely under their control, and for common affairs a new rigsraad was introduced, with limited powers - it was partly elected and partly nominated by the king, and had no initiative in legislation. The chief author of this scheme, Schele, was himself a Holsteiner. 67.

Slesvig and Holstein each obtained a degree of self-government far exceeding anything that they had previously possessed/

possessed, and their influence in the direction of common affairs was equally extended. It might have been supposed
 80. that Holstein and her friends would have been pleased by this: far from it. The constitution-makers in Copenhagen found themselves assailed with a storm of abuse, and Schele was denounced as a renegade. It is unnecessary to specify all the complaints of the German party, which were of the most frivolous nature. In the end, after Holstein and the Diet had rejected^v all the concessions patiently offered by the Danish Government, the Diet finally, in 1858, declared that the Constitution was not valid in Holstein and Lauenburg, on the grounds that it had not been submitted to the approval
 81. of the Holstein estates, and^v so was contrary to the agreement of 1852. Denmark at last revoked the unlucky constitution, as far as the German duchies were concerned; and laid it, and also a new and much more liberal charter, before the Holstein estates for their amendment. Holstein refused to consider this offer, and demanded the restoration of the old connection with Slesvig. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Then they drew up their ideal constitution: the connection with the central government was to be reduced to the most slender tie possible, while Holstein and Slesvig were to be closely united; Denmark was to continue/

(10) * This would, of course, have been equally a violation of the Agreement of 1852.

82. continue to pay two-thirds of the common expenses, but each of the duchies was to have an equal voice in expenditure.

At the same time Germany formulated her demands. The Danish Government had, as has been seen, engaged itself to give the four provinces an equal influence in common affairs, and had given each duchy a number of representatives in the central assembly, in proportion to its population. Germany, however, interpreted the clause as meaning that the vote of each duchy should be equal to that of Denmark Proper - that little Lauenburg, with her poor 50,000, should have the same authority in questions of war and peace and national expenditure, as Denmark with her 2,000,000 souls and she demanded that until the constitution was altered in consonance with this principle, no law affecting common affairs was to be passed without the consent of the Holstein estates. (The German minority was practically to control all the affairs of the Danish monarchy). Needless to say, this idea was absolutely repudiated by ^{Mr.} Minister Hall, who was now at the head of affairs in Copenhagen.

So the Diet stormed, regardless of the protests of the Danish and Dutch Plenipotentiaries: Holstein consistently rejected every proposal of any nature whatever that was laid before her by Denmark; and Denmark found herself deprived of the revenues of Holstein, unable to pass a single/

single law on common affairs, and threatened with another federal execution if she did not immediately comply with Germany's demands. She therefore decided to try her luck with a new constitution.

29 In March, 1861 she presented to Holstein a Charter granting a free press, freedom of association, Habeas Corpus, and responsibility of officials^v to ordinary tribunals. No 72. German state had a constitution so liberal or so progressive. Holstein refused it with abusive language, refused to propose 85. any alternative, and sulkily said that there could^v be no peace till Slesvig was a part of the German Confederation. ~~Germany herself was determined that the principle of representation according to population must be set aside.~~ Meanwhile a second subject of complaint had roused acute feeling through all the Confederation.

~~This was what was known as~~ "Danish oppression" in Slesvig. After the rebellion of 1848, Denmark had taken measures to punish the leaders of the German party which were too severe to be approved by the Western Powers, though Germany, in view of conditions in Poland, could not logically 86. protest against them. No one had been executed, but there 73. had been floggings and imprisonments. This time was long past; but since then, pro-German officials had been dismissed, and newspapers and public meetings which advocated the annexation of Slesvig to Germany had been sternly suppressed.

Danish/

Danish had been reintroduced into a number of schools and churches in the Mixed Districts, and this had probably happened in some parishes where the language chiefly spoken was German. (~~Apart from the fact that Danish is a simple language, which can be learned by a German or an Englishman in a few months.~~) This was exactly what the Schleswig-Holstein Party had done^v in Danish villages a few years earlier; and therefore ought not to have been termed "oppression" by them; but it is peculiarly irritating to have your^v own weapons turned against yourself. 74.

Germany had no more legal right to interfere with the ^{internal} Danish government of Slesvig, than France would have to interfere with the British administration in Quebec: but an incident in the negotiations of 1851-2 had given Germany a chance to manufacture such a claim. In accepting the Austrian terms, Denmark had sent to Austria, as proof of her willingness to fulfil her pledge, the copy of a public proclamation, which declared the King's intention of taking the constitutional steps demanded by Austria. The proclamation also contained references to other affairs, and included an expression of^v the King's desire to give "equal rights" to his German and Danish subjects in Slesvig. Seizing upon this clause, Germany maintained that Denmark had thereby made this promise to her and so had given her a right to interfere upon this point. (~~There had never been any mention of this/~~) 75.

~~this question in the terms proposed by Austria and accepted by Denmark, nor was the demand one which Austria was likely to bring forward; and on the chance reference to it in the Danish proclamation rested the whole German claim to intervention.~~

to N.P. here
 It proved, however, remarkably useful to those who were directing the policy of Germany. ~~It was a point unimportant in itself, but which could be used with the most powerful effect in arousing popular feeling.~~ On constitutional and dynastic matters German feeling was divided, but on this point all were united. A nationalist crusade could be raised, almost at a moment's notice, and political and military ambition could always shelter itself under the cloak of racial feeling. Soon in a thousand German homes tears were being shed for the oppressed Slesvigers. In other countries, too, the question was skilfully pressed upon the attention of the government, ^{always} ~~In Great Britain feeling could almost be roused on such a point, while Napoleon III had constituted himself the especial champion of nationalism. In both these states Germany used this weapon with effect. She implanted a thorn in the conscience of the British Liberal leaders, which, by rendering them doubtful of their own consistency and less sympathetic towards Denmark, did her infinite service.~~
 The/

(The men who had applauded the renaissance of Italy could not
 q1. but feel, that if the German^v allegations with regard to
 oppression in Slesvig were true, they were, in supporting
 Denmark, running contrary to their own expressed convictions;
 and their Danish policy became so much the less whole-hearted.)
 They were doubtful, too, whether Germany had not
 right on her side in contending that the constitutional en-
 gagements of 1851-2 had not been fulfilled. And on this
 point Germany's case was certainly much stronger.

The significance of the steps taken by Denmark
 between 1852 and 1863^{has} had been much debated. Germany at
 the time, and German and other historians since, maintained
 q2. that they amounted to a repudiation^v of Denmark's obligations,
 and to the incorporation of Slesvig. But Denmark and her 77.
 friends averred that none of the constitutional schemes
 brought forward during this period involved or even tended
 towards the incorporation of Slesvig. They all left Slesvig
 with local institutions, legislature, law-courts, and executive.
 They also provided that Slesvig send members to a central
 parliament^{or} of Rigsraad to decide on common affairs; but how
 else could the national government be carried on? "The link
 which, according to the recent Constitution, unites Austria
 and Hungary is exactly of the same nature. Is Hungary on that
 account/

q3. ~~account incorporated into Austria?~~ ^{This, it was written,} It "is precisely the tie which unites Ohio and Pennsylvania. Would it be correct to say that Ohio was incorporated into Pennsylvania?"* (11)

Which side is correct in its estimate of the Danish legislation? We must at once reply, Germany. ~~In spite of the arguments of the Danes~~ - ^{78.} In spite of the fact that the various constitutions on the face of them preserve Slesvig's independence, Germany was right when she maintained that Denmark had broken her pledges, and that the Danish incorporation of Slesvig had begun. All the draft constitutions tended to ^{79.} this, and in that of 1863 it was certainly the object of the Hall Ministry, even if publicly denied. The key to the whole matter lies not in the position assigned to Slesvig but in that assigned to Holstein. Now in almost all the proposed schemes Holstein, ~~(usually)~~ owing to her own refusal, was not represented in the central Rigsraad. Any constitutional connection which included Slesvig and excluded Holstein must inevitably, by sheer force of gravity, draw the two Danish countries together, and widen the gulf between them and their German neighbour. The German minority in ~~South~~ Slesvig would soon be absorbed, when all their interests and ambitions ^{79.} should turn naturally towards Copenhagen. More, it is almost certain/

(11) Salisbury, Essays, p. 126.

certain that Danish statesmen were fully conscious of this tendency, and had indeed this for their chief object. In self-defence, they denied this. But it was an open secret in which the whole Danish people participated, and by 1863 it was frankly admitted in the newspapers, though still dis-claimed by the government. 80.

Now it is a dangerous thing for a small country to break a promise to a big one. What induced Danish statesmen to take this perilous and doubtful path? 30.

They were forced into it, ~~(one may answer)~~ by 96. Danish public opinion; but they shared this opinion in full, themselves. There was, in fact, in Denmark an extraordinary unity of feeling upon this point. King, ministers, and commons, were animated by the same desire. Nationalism, after all, is not confined to Germany; it was showing itself quite as strongly in Denmark; and in this Danish statesmen found their justification and their support. 81.

A conviction was growing up in the breast of every Danish man and woman that the situation was no longer to be borne. If Holstein meant the German connection, Holstein 97. might go; but not for any consideration on earth must Denmark continue to allow to a foreign state the right to meddle with her private affairs. Denmark had contracted engagements towards/

towards Germany, but they were engagements which should never have been signed, and which no patriotic Dane could keep. By them, Denmark was fettered hand and foot. While every European country was consolidating its position, strengthening its organisation, and drawing closer the bonds which united its people, Denmark alone was to remain weak, disunited, defenceless; hampered by an unworkable system of government, and obliged to submit to the dictation of a rich and powerful neighbour. ~~She must make no attempt to reclaim her Danish subjects, take into her heart her lost province, or to obliterate the old artificial local boundaries.~~ The Unity, which was the cry of half the races of Europe, was forbidden to her - and this by the decree of a foreign power. ~~(Moralists have decided that on an individual an oath exacted by force is not binding; the same excuse is denied to a nation.)~~ Denmark and Germany were, in fact, in the precise situation described in the third act of "Hernani". ^{only} In this case Hernani determined not to commit suicide. ~~(and the Old Gentleman~~ 82
 98. ~~was correspondingly annoyed.)~~ 83

There were men in Scandinavia who clearly understood that the key to the situation was to be found, not in any treaty or agreement of the past, but in the hankering of Germany to possess Kiel. German politicians themselves began/

began to admit frankly, that no step taken by the Danish government to fulfil the engagements of 1852, however sincere it might be, would now satisfy the Confederation. The Baltic ports, and not the good government of the duchies, was dearest to the German heart, it was said. And so in the North 100. the idea grew up of the possibility of a counter-balancing 84 state on the Baltic - a united Scandinavian state which would re-establish a Northern sea-power perhaps more formidable than the empire of the Vasas - a state strong enough to defy Germany. This idea, deprecated but insidious, was whispered all over the North - all over Europe. Russia was alarmed; Britain was alarmed. In Stockholm the prudent Manderström, in Copenhagen the enthusiastic Hall, secretly weighed the project. One man flung himself into it heart and soul. Hamilton, Swedish ambassador at Copenhagen, urged upon his government the wisdom of a close alliance with Denmark, and 85. 101. it seems that he regarded this as the first step to a Scandinavian union.

These schemes were not yet acknowledged by any of the governments concerned; but they showed that Denmark, in adopting a strong nationalist policy, might count on support abroad. They showed, too, the strength of popular feeling. Any government that deliberately ran counter to the Eider-Dane/

Eider-Dane policy, and tried to fulfil the demands of Germany, would have short shrift with the Danish people when it came to election day.

We have now reached, indeed slightly passed, the year in which this^v study is supposed to begin. The situation⁸⁶ in Denmark and Germany in 1860 has been described. Immediately afterwards, it was essentially altered by several events. The formation of a united Italy gave the signal for a new outbreak of Liberal Nationalism; and shortly afterwards European Liberalism suffered an irreparable loss by the death of Cavour, the only Statesman who was the equal of Bismarck in perception, capacity, and courage. Cavour had adopted liberal principles where Bismarck rejected them, and if, as is very possible, the two had been pitted against each other, what a battle of the Titans would have ensued! We can⁸⁷ picture that bland beneficent countenance, with its pussy-cat^v Machiavellian air, in opposition to the grand aquiline head of the Prussian reactionary. But the premature death of Cavour rid Bismarck of the only man able to outface him, and deprived Liberalism of its great leader, at the very moment when it was gathering its forces for a new struggle.

At the same time, the death of the King of Prussia called to the throne a new sovereign, in whom a mixture of weakness/

(12.)

weakness and obstinacy^u made him an admirable tool in the hands of^v the man who presently became his first minister. 88.

104. The way was now opened for a change of policy^v on the part of Prussia, and she found herself facing a crisis. The Liberals expected the king to give way to them, and make Prussia a constitutional monarchy on the English model, which would soon merge in a new united Germany of the same type. King William found himself forced to choose between thus abdicating his absolute power, or making a determined stand against the growing strength of liberalism. For a time he wavered; a constitutional crisis made the decision instantly necessary. The king faced the thought^v of abdication, of death at the 89. hands of a revolutionary mob. To him, in this ^{mood} ~~condition~~ of somewhat exaggerated despair, came a diplomatist, a known conservative and reactionary, who had never held a ministerial post, but who told the king that he was ready to fight to the last, preserve the royal authority intact, and smash the Liberal opposition. The king yielded to the stronger mind, and an astonished Europe saw Otto von Bismarck suddenly promoted from the embassy at Paris to the first office of the Prussian state. Slowly, imperceptibly to the outside eye, the leadership of German affairs shifted.^v Austria, the Diet, the 90. Liberal leaders, became equally insignificant. Bismarck was gathering/

(12.) or, as Sybel says, his "rare combination of firmness and flexibility of mind" (~~Begründung des Deutschen Reichs~~ II p. 201.)

(Sybel, II p. 201.)

106. gathering the reins into his own hands.

This new development coincided with a resolve on the part of the Danish government to make a bold stroke and carry the Eider-Dane policy at all costs. It coincided, too, with a growing impatience on the part of the British government to see this troublesome dragging business settled. A crisis was rapidly approaching, for all parties were eager to end the uncertainty. ~~(It is now necessary to see who were the British leaders whose duty it was to deal with the situation.)~~

III.

The Cabinet of London was at this time one of the most brilliant ever ~~seen~~^{seen}, a veritable Ministry-of-all-the-Talents. 91
The wise had been sceptical as to its long life, for this very reason. It included names eminent in every branch of politics, but in foreign affairs the most significant were those of the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston; the Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell, now Lord Russell; and the President of the Council, Lord Granville.

These gentlemen, known to their contemporaries as Cupid, Johnny, and Puss, were in foreign affairs the guiding influences of the Cabinet. The others, on such questions, were mostly content to range themselves behind one or other of these leaders. 92
Two of the three were veterans of politics----children of the old aristocracy, and survivors of the European War: but, as we read of their express and manifold energy, it is hard to realise this. These graybeards kept some spice of eternal youth. Watching them, one is reminded of the terrific Massinissa, or of old Penda

swinging his battle-axe on the red Winwedfield, and one feels that England was a political Never-Never-Land, peopled with Peter Pans.

John Russell was the younger of the two. His is a name great in British history, revered ~~(by those who remember it)~~ for purity and nobility, and appealing to the com- 93 mon mind by some more earthly qualities. He was plucky and obstinate, the sickly little gentleman, with his pale face and great forehead. He was conscientious; capable of self-sacrifice. But he was, perhaps, of all living statesmen the most incapable of the conduct of foreign affairs. He was able, for one thing, to see that there may be two sides to a question, and this is a dangerous quality for a statesman not dowered with corresponding steadiness of purpose: and Lord Russell was as changeable as a weathercock. He was at the mercy of every fresh opinion that entered his receptive mind. Also, 94 being of an extraordinarily active and meddling disposition, he was in the habit of acting immediately under each new influence, before giving his thoughts time to settle and mature. "Johnny always loves to do something when to do nothing is prudent" ⁽³⁾ a friend wrote of him. And this policy was therefore apt to veer and tack and stagger like a rook flying against the wind.

Neither/

Neither had he any conception of minding his own business. He believed he had a duty towards his neighbours; the time was out of joint, and Lord Russell, decidedly, had⁹⁵ been born to set it right. His position at the Foreign Office gave him an unrivalled opportunity to interfere with other people's affairs. Benighted foreign governments should at least no longer err through ignorance. ~~(He would show them the better way.)~~ He could not understand that foreign statesmen might not always be ready to receive his advice in the spirit in which it was offered; but such was the case. All the European powers, when not forced by circumstances to cringe to their wealthy neighbour, repudiated the kind interest of Lord Russell with coldness - nay, even with rage and contempt. This was partly, perhaps, due to the language he frequently employed. He was in private life the most tactless of men; and he had picked up an occasional practice⁶ of Palmerston's of addressing foreign powers in the same manner as Imperial Rome might have used to some petty Asiatic⁹⁶ client: the combination often resulted in an unparalleled insolence.

~~(He shared, too, one of the most serious defects of British statesmanship in foreign affairs. He had been trained in a school whose attitude in such matters, when not under the/~~

the influence of some specially able individual, was one of Drift; and he was now almost incapable of following out one line of thought, or of drawing up and holding to a definite scheme. He, like so many other Foreign Secretaries, was most at ease when waiting for something to turn up, and found it easy to let accident decide his course at every doubtful moment. The attitude was not incompatible with a deference to principles.

Finally, Lord Russell was an adept in the favourite amusement of the White Queen. This lady, it will be remembered, could believe six impossible things before breakfast. Lord Russell, at seventy, could believe almost anything that suited his convenience. In this way he protected himself from some memories that might else have been rather unpleasant.

Joined in office with this man was the strange individual who for many years had been the Enfant Terrible of Europe. Palmerston was his old self still, incalculable as ever. Time had not staled his infinite variety. But the passing years, and perhaps one or two regrettable incidents, had slightly blunted his pugnacity and sweetened his temper. And notwithstanding the debonnaire courage with which he bore his eighty years, he could not keep all his old barbaric energy. In his prime, flashes of genius had alternated with fits/

fits of lassitude and levity that made the first shine more brilliantly. But no man can afford deliberately to neglect his own powers; and Palmerston's laziness and wastefulness
 9. had tarnished the brightness of his intellect and keenness of his perceptions, just[✓] as much as old age had lessened his⁹⁸ energy. He could still see more clearly than many of his contemporaries; but not so clearly as once. He could still conceive a strong and determined policy; but he no longer had the mere physical energy, or the rollicking self-confidence, to carry that policy through single-handed against general opposition.

82
 These two represented Morier's "overlapping generation". Granville, the President of the Council, was a man of the younger set. In comparison with the two octogenarians,
 10 he was a mere boy, having completed but some fifty summers, which had, indeed, left him[✓] some of the endearing chubbiness⁹⁹ of infancy. Yet he had long attained a sobriety, a sedate and settled outlook, unknown to his ardent seniors. Granville, in fact, was a political changeling. Malignant fate
^{set him in a Liberal environment,}
~~had caused him to be "born a little Lib-er-al"~~, when all the tendencies of his nature were in another direction. His cautious, tenacious, and unapprehensive mind would have made him a strong tower to the most rigid and narrow section of the/
 the/

the Old Tory party, ---now almost extinct---had not fortune, in playful mood, directed the stork to the stateliest of Whig mansions. As it was, though he adopted the Liberal principles, he was at heart a pure Conservative, if we regard these two parties as representing not merely the temporary tendencies of the day, but the deep-rooted characteristics of the mind. The impulse of the true Liberal is revolutionary - discard the past, and anticipate the gifts of the future. The impulse of the true Conservative, is to preserve what has been gained, and face the future with a "bear the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of", rather than any more hopeful attitude. Granville, as has been said, was compelled by his environment to adopt the leading Liberal principles; but, once adopted, he clung to them with a conservative obstinacy, and imparted to them a complete rigidity and permanence. He himself was accustomed to say with pride, that he had been a convinced Free Trader before leaving school, and that he had, during fifty years, never in the least degree modified his opinions. This was his attitude on most points; he did not correct his early impressions from the experiences of his life. In foreign affairs, his policy was directed by ideas formed in the days of his boyhood. ~~When the impressions left by the Napoleonic Wars were still living and fresh~~ Conscientiously devoted to/

to his party, he constituted himself a brake on the flying¹⁰² wheels of Palmerston and Russell. He possessed a fund of tactful and unassuming obstinacy that made him a formidable foe. Where Russell found any sort of action better than none, Granville invariably preferred an attitude of non-interference and cautious observation. He was a strong advocate of the theory that Britain should hold aloof, and allow her neighbours to settle their differences among themselves.

It must be acknowledged at once that never had
 14 Britain a premier and a foreign secretary more primed with good intentions. They wished well to all. They wanted to¹⁰³ preserve the alliance ^{with} of France; to foster the growth of a united Italy; they smiled paternally on the aspirations of Germany towards unity and liberty; they wished to all peace, prosperity (within reasonable limits), and a constitutional government on the English model. But, with the natural preference of old age for the fireside, they deprecated all violent action in the attainment of these ideals. Their wish to preserve peace was in fact so intense that, the wish
 18 being father^v to the thought, they had not yet realised the strength of the forces which were now making for war. To¹⁰⁴ the peace-lover, the idea that any statesman can deliberately choose to make war an essential factor in his policy, is so repellent/

repellent that the first impulse is to reject it entirely.

~~The situation had completely changed since 1848.~~
~~Then~~ the position of Denmark, and the position of Britain in supporting the Danish cause, had been very favourable. Russia and France had both acted with Britain. Germany had been disunited in herself. The government of Prussia had been weak and incapable, and that of Austria inimical to the Nationalist movement in Germany.

By 1861, all these circumstances had changed. The British government was at a disadvantage in that it failed to realise how great was this change, and what had caused it.

(Go straight on)

VI.

The central point in the whole affair was, of course, the establishment of the new regime in Prussia.

This had met with universal disapproval. It had long been hoped that the new king would put a Liberal government in power. Instead, he had chosen a man, of whom it was only known that he had handled some minor diplomatic matters capably, and that he was a hardened reactionary. Otto von Bismarck was already unpopular with thinking Germany. The British government was disappointed at this falling away of King William, and was inclined to dislike and despise the new minister. It was not believed that his ministry would last/

last more than a few months. He was a blunt, outspoken, blustering sort of fellow, who, though he could be very attractive when he liked, was also capable of vulgar humour and overbearing violence. At times he would talk with crude directness upon subjects which were alluded to by his fellow-statesmen only by delicate insinuations. Sir Andrew Buchanan, British ambassador at Berlin, found this habit unpleasant, and he did not yet perceive that Bismarck's frankness might be assumed for a purpose just as much as ¹⁰⁷ the too great politeness of some of his neighbours. For Englishmen, the duplicity of the continental mind was personified in the suave and graceful figures of ^{an older} ~~the last~~ generation, Metternich and Talleyrand. They vaguely felt that a man so rude as Bismarck often was, simply couldn't be telling lies. The truth was, that Bismarck had attained an artistic mastery over the lie never equalled by Metternich.

19. He suited his manner of lying in every case to the taste of his audience. He lied, too, with the abandonment of the true artist, without fear of the consequences; so long as ¹⁰⁸ it served his turn for the moment, he had not the least objection to being exposed ^{later} ~~in the future~~. He did not desire to preserve a reputation for truth-telling, for he was confident in his own powers of deceiving again in the future.

As/

As yet, however, the British government did not regard him with any suspicion. His character of reactionary carried with it a taint of violence and recklessness, and they did not think that such a man would have either the ability or the patience to carry out a long-continued course of deception. Bismarck could, indeed, be both violent and reckless where he thought it advisable; but both these qualities were admirably controlled by his cool and keen intelligence.

33 ~~In later life, Bismarck was in the habit of saying that he considered the handling of the Slesvig-Holstein question his most remarkable achievement. Posterity has endorsed his verdict. For though, as has been already said, he found in the Duchies materials ready to his hand, yet the difficulties of the situation were many and great, and he managed them with an unequalled certainty and skill.~~

~~At home, he had a sovereign upon whose will his office depended, and who was obstinate and self-willed enough to be capable of giving him considerable trouble, especially as he possessed what Lord Napier, with unintentional felicity, called "an intermittent conscience," which was apt to awake at inconvenient moments. Bismarck had already established a personal ascendancy over the king's mind which he took much pains to preserve, managing him by methods a little resembling those of Sarah Jennings with Queen Anne. He was, with all this, throughout the Danish trouble, involved in a constitutional crisis of the highest intensity at home. He was distrusted and despised by~~

by the German governments, and he was detested by the Liberals, and especially by the Prussian Liberals. They refused him supplies, and he disregarded the law and took what he needed. He could count on no quarter from the Liberals if he failed.

Delicate as was his position at home, his difficulties were even greater abroad. He had several tasks to perform.

He had to transfer the leadership of German affairs from Austria, the Diet, and ~~from~~ the Liberal leaders to himself. A Liberal solution of the Slesvig-Holstein problem was above all repellent to him. He had rather, he said, let Denmark incorporate the duchies. Such a solution seemed very possible now, with the flood of National-Liberal enthusiasm rising to high tide, and almost directing the decisions of the Diet upon this point. ~~But such a solution~~ meant that the duchies would be united under the Duke of Augustenburg, and that eventually they, and Prussia herself, would be merged in a new United Germany, a constitutional parliamentary state like Great Britain. Bismarck, the reactionary, would be flung aside, and Prussia, the strong military monarchy, would have lost her most essential characteristics, and broken away from all the traditions that had made her great. So Bismarck must make sure that when the attack on Denmark came, it should be by Prussia as a European power, not by the German Confederation.

Next,/

Next, Bismarck dared not allow the three powers which had acted against Germany in 1848 to act in concert now. He must detach Russia from the Western powers, because, like the other great men who made Prussia, he dreaded the hostility of Russia above all things. 113.

Thirdly, he must if possible separate Britain and France, for he could not risk a war with both - hardly even with one of them. In any case, he must deceive Britain; France could probably be bribed. (Of Britain he had the greater dread; but of his power of blind-leading her he was sufficiently assured.)

Russia was already on bad terms with the Western Powers, owing to the Crimean War; but this had not led to a corresponding rapprochement with Prussia. It is true that during the war the Prussian government had refused to take any steps against Russia, and had indeed, short of joining in the war, done all in its power to assist her; but the neutral's part is a thankless one: he is usually mistrusted by both sides; and the conduct of Prussia had been appraised in Petersburg as merely due to self-interest and timidity. 114.

Bismarck, however, had been ambassador in Russia since then, and had used his opportunities to form a personal friendship with the Tsar and his ministers.

With France, the difficulty would be great. From the beginning of his reign the central object of Louis Napoleon's policy had been to secure the British alliance. He believed that the enmity of Britain had caused the downfall of his great namesake, and he did not intend to make the same mistake. He thought to secure the friendship of Britain by supporting her foreign and colonial policy; he would then lend his aid to establish the unity of Italy and of Germany, and as payment, he dreamed, would receive the frontier of the Rhine, ^{while} ~~for France~~ Belgium, on the death of Leopold, would of her own free will drift into union with France. After this he would take the lead in a general disarmament. These high-flown ideas were more or less vague; he might have to be satisfied with less; but the fulfilment of even a part of them, he believed, was conditional on the friendship of Britain. 115.

His anxiety to secure this ally had just been most clearly demonstrated. The cession of Savoy and Nice to France, though by vote of the inhabitants, had produced a chorus of execration in England. Palmerston, who had just come into office, deliberately poured oil on the flame, and was fully supported by the "Times". The Prime Minister told the public that fifty thousand French troops might be landed on the shores of England without a moment's warning, and brought forward an elaborate scheme of new armaments, which he openly stated to be aimed at "our immediate neighbours across the Channel." 116.

Cobden had been engaged in negotiating the commercial 117.

treaty with France, a treaty to which the **Emppror** had consented, not because he had been converted to Free Trade, but (simply) because he wished to conciliate Britain. The position of the British envoy was made painful and difficult by the action of his government.

"In the midst of my labours upon the details of the French tariff, in which I had every day found greater proofs of the honest intention of the French government, I observed a constant increase in the military preparations in England, which completely falsified my promises to the Emperor. And now we were daily threatened with a proposal for a large outlay for fortifications... ~~(added that)~~ ...if the latter scheme were announced, I should feel disinclined again to see the Emperor."

"Pepple speak of it," ^{Cobden} he added a little later, "As an indication that out court and aristocracy are inclined to renew the policy of 1792, by forming another coalition in opposition to France. They say that the inspiration of our policy in arming and fortifying comes from Berlin and Brussels through the British court." And, comparing his own experiences with the ^{story} account of the signing of the French commercial treaty in 1786, he wrote, "You will not read that in the midst of these negotiations Pitt rose in the house and declared that he apprehended danger of a sudden and unprovoked attack on our shores by the French king; that (while history told us that we had 84,000 men voted for our navy to the 31,000 in France, and whilst we had 150,000 riflemen assembled for drill) he, Mr Pitt, pursued the eccentric course of proposing that the nation should spend ten millions on fortifications, and that

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he accompanied this with speeches in the House, in which he imputed treacherous and unprovoked designs upon us on the part of the monarch with whom his own plenipotentiary was then negotiating....Palmerston had not one hostile act ~~against~~ us to allege against the sovereign with whom I was, with his sanction, negotiating the Treaty."¹⁴⁾

With all this, Britain was spending £15,000,000 on her navy, against the £6,000,000 of France, and Palmerston overlooked the fact that if France had really wanted to "humble and punish England" she would have found a much better moment to attack three years before, when all available troops had been sent to India. Yet in spite of this extreme provocation, Napoleon had carried through the treaty, against commercial opposition, and purely with the object "to strengthen the friendly relations of the French and English peoples, and to give the world an assurance that he did not contemplate a career of war and conquest." He and his ministers were generous enough to interpret the conduct of Palmerston as an electioneering manoeuvre; and two years later they gave Britain such hearty diplomatic support in the Trent affair as was decisive, in the opinion of good judges, in preventing the Northern States from declaring war. So stubborn a determination on the part of France to cling to the British alliance seemed to augur ill for Bismarck's hopes; yet, by peculiar circumstances, both his objects---the separation of the Western Powers, and their alienation from Russia---were effected simultaneously. This was not due to Bismarck's efforts alone; chance

14) Cobden to Bright, 4 Feb. 1861. Cobden, p. 513.

15) ~~Palmerston~~, p. 391.

16) Cobden to Palmerston, 10 July, 1860. Cobden, p. 499.

played into his
 hands, and everything fell out as he desired. ~~To use the~~
 35 ~~proverbial expression, he had the devil's own luck.~~

Bismarck's chief ally in the matter was Lord Russell. Lord Russell was unconscious of the fact; he was, in truth, an angel unawares: but had Bismarck dictated the policy of 123 Great Britain in the Polish crisis, it could not have suited his purpose better.

That most unhappy country had at last been driven into a general revolt, the immediate cause of which was the arrest and express dispatch to Siberia of several thousand Polish youths who had taken part in a political demonstration. The disorder which followed gave the Tsar excuse to revoke 36 the constitution, the one wretched rag of compensation which the Treaty of Vienna had secured to the once glorious Commonwealth. There had always been much sympathy in England for the oppressed Poles, and the newspapers now with one 124 voice burst into a sort of commination psalm against Russia. Private individuals raised funds and freely promised help to the revolutionary leaders. Russell shared to the full the indignation of his fellow-countrymen. He found himself in a position where his denunciatory powers might have full play. Russia was putting down the insurrection with all her usual 37 methods; with fire and sword. Russell hastily applied to France and Prussia to join him in a protest against the action of Russia. ~~As light on Russell's character, it may~~
 be/

be said that he really hoped Prussia would accept his invitation.

He was of course disappointed. ^{by Prussia} For Prussia ^{her} to sign the protest was to sign her own death-warrant. She held Posen, as Russia Lithuania, by the strong hand. Her own Poles, not yet in revolt, were trembling in her grasp with sympathy for their Russian fellows. Add to this, that the demand came at a moment when Bismarck was straining every nerve to gain 38. the friendship of Russia. He not only returned a refusal to Britain, but he immediately made an agreement with Prince Gortschakoff, by which he gave whole-hearted support to Russia's policy and arranged for the mutual extradition of political refugees: the Russo-Prussian frontier was for the time being practically abolished. Bismarck might therefore 125. thank Britain for an opportunity to give Russia an additional proof of his friendship.

France received Russell's proposal very differently. She had always been peculiarly interested in the fate of Poland; she was also anxious to act in concert with Britain wherever possible. She eagerly joined in the protest, and 39. Austria, ever ready to check-mate Russia in Poland, signed it also.

Gortschakoff received it good-humouredly. He was assured of Prussian support. He politely told Lord Russell to mind his own business, and continued his massacres and floggings. The/

The Poles, at the information^v that the Western Powers had come to their aid, revived, and continued the desperate struggle. 127.

Russell continued to act with an energy which delighted equally the French and the Poles. He now presented, for the approval of France, six points, which were to be pressed upon Russia; they included the restoration of the constitution, and a general amnesty; and the language in which the dispatch was couched was not that of counsel, but that of command. The demand was such as Russia could never accept. It was, in fact, an ultimatum. France began to make preparations for war.

Prince Gortschakoff^v was distinctly annoyed at the language used. His refusal, this time, was curt. There was a burst of enthusiasm in France, and the Poles held out gallantly. Lord Russell, however, was quite unaware that he had issued an ultimatum, and that he was expected to go to war. 128.

41 The British government sympathised with the Poles, but did not dream of such madness as going to their help with armed assistance. Neither country nor Queen would stand such quixotry. ^{he} Russell was seriously hurt at having his excellent advice flung back in his face. He sat down and penned another dispatch. His^v language was peevish and his tone injured. He^{129.} salved his feelings by viciously remarking, in conclusion, that in his opinion Russia had forfeited her treaty right to Poland.

The/

The British ambassador at St Petersburg, Lord Napier, ^{like} a prudent man, took the precaution of showing the dispatch to Prince Gortschakoff in a private interview before the official presentation. The Prince's comment was suggestive. "You had better not submit to me that last sentence", he said. The letter was accordingly returned to London; Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State deleted the offending words, and the Russian¹³⁰ minister now condescended to receive the curtailed dispatch. Lord Russell turned his facile pen to other subjects, and Russia, enraged by their protracted resistance, gave her undivided attention to the Polish rebels.

The state of public opinion in France may easily be imagined. ~~This~~ country, so sensitive upon the point of honour, had been exposed to an unexampled humiliation. Great Britain ¹³¹ had initiated the whole affair, carried it through with the loyal support of the French government, and then left France in the lurch. The Emperor tried to cover his defeat by proposing a general conference on European affairs, at which the Polish question should be settled by all the powers, and those of Italy and Denmark discussed. ⁽¹⁷⁾ But Lord Russell was still out of temper, and he sent a rude refusal to have anything to do with the plan. ⁽¹⁸⁾ Deeply wounded and bitterly resentful, the Emperor regarded the matter as a personal insult. ⁽¹⁹⁾ M. Drouyn de Lhuys, who had always been on bad terms with Palmerston,

⁽¹⁷⁾ He offered to withdraw his troops from Rome if the majority at the Conference decreed it. (Cowley, 18.11.63. F.O. France, 1498.) ⁽¹⁸⁾ This action was taken in secret understanding with Prussia and Russia, though those powers accepted. See footnote, p. 168. ⁽¹⁹⁾ Cowley, 15.12. ^{November} ^{December} 63., F.O. France, 1499.

shared his master's feelings to the full. As yet, Lord Russell was entirely unaware of the way in which the incident was regarded in France. It is possible that he really did not feel the full humiliation¹³² to which he had been himself subjected and he was certainly unaware of the shock that had been given to British prestige throughout Europe. He knew that the French were touchy and excitable, with queer exaggerated ideas about foreign affairs; and he smiled indulgently at their frenzy of indignation. They would soon talk themselves quiet, and cool down. (20)

Others, however, both at home and abroad, were not so blind to the true state of affairs. A few men in England knew what had happened, and so did every continental statesman. The Anglo-French Entente was broken. The two great Western Powers whose concert imposed a law on Europe were now divided, and he who would "let loose the dogs of war" might do so with little risk. The well-wishers of both countries were troubled. "You ask my opinion about Lord Russell's answer", the Queen of Holland wrote to Lord Clarendon, /

(20) "M. Drouyn de Lhuys does not conceal his conviction that the Danish question must end in hostilities. I hinted that whenever H.E. had had enough of his ill-humour with us, we should not be long in settling it to rights." (Cowley. 25. 12. 63. F.O. France 1499) 1865.

France will be irritated if the Congress is refused, but this will not matter to England, though it may to the continental powers. (Cowley, 14. 11. 63 F.O. France, 1498. November)

Clarendon, "I must candidly express that I think it deplorable.

116. It is the death-blow of an alliance which ought to have dominated the world, managed the affairs of the continent, assured us an era of peace. ⁽²¹⁾ It is over. England wishes to forget that the Emperor has been her faithful ally, that he ¹⁸⁴ helped her in the "Trent" affair, ... You answer him with scorn. You deeply move and insult public feeling in France, always ready to turn against you". ⁽²²⁾

The effect of the incident on the public opinion of Europe had in truth been "deplorable". It must be remembered that the policy of Palmerston had always been a militant one, ¹³⁵ and within the last few years incidents had occurred in which the action of himself and Lord Russell had been indeed violent and over-bearing. An ~~unfortunate~~ South American republic had been threatened, bullied, and abused for an insult to the British navy, which, on investigation, turned out to be purely imaginary. A Japanese town had been levelled to the ground by British naval guns, in retaliation for a private crime committed in another district, for which the Japanese government had offered all reasonable compensation. Europe had still a vivid memory of the Don Pacifico affair. But in all these ¹³⁶ cases, and others also, the adversary had been a small or a backward state. Now, it was said, for the first time the superb/

(22) * ~~Marshall~~ Clarendon. Vol. II. p. 286.

(21) * Gortschakov also regarded the refusal in this light. He said to Napier that he hoped "H.M. Government would not be in too great a hurry to repudiate the existence of a common attitude of resistance to the ascendancy of France in connection with the question of a Congress---a combination which had spontaneously grown up, and which was naturally founded on common interests." (Napier. 18.6.64. F.O., Russia, 658.

superb "Roman Citizen" found himself face to face with a powerful, an^v equal foe, and he had shown himself no more^{136.} than a bully. His bluster had ended in ignominious collapse, and he had swallowed a cruel insult as meekly as a child swallows a pill. Palmerston had hitherto been disliked, but respected. Now he was feared no longer. The threats of Great Britain were only threats, and Lord Russell's moral lectures only English cant.

49. The Polish affair, and the consequent estrangement of France and Britain, took place in the summer of 1864, at the same time as the Danish crisis was maturing. The coincidence was a matter of pure luck for Bismarck, but he handled it as^v only a great statesman could. The National-^{137.} Liberal party had proved its worth by favouring the cause of the oppressed Poles, and he might have helped to reconcile them to his ministry by joining in the protest of the Western Powers; but his keen eye saw that to sacrifice the friendship of Russia to buy the friendship of the Opposition^v at home was sacrificing the substance for the shadow; He could manage the Liberals; he could never manage Russia. But, although no one could better profit by such chance good fortune, Bismarck was not the man to rely on luck^{138.} alone. He had already formed his own plans for the separation of the Western Powers, and he continued to develop them while taking full advantage of the Polish quarrel./

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quarrel. [In order to describe Bismarck's Russian policy, it has been necessary to look far ahead. We must now return to the opening of ^{his} Bismarck's Ministry, and follow the course of events in Britain, in France, and in Denmark itself, before the Polish revolt brought the Danish question to a crisis.

In the case of France Bismarck followed the plan of bribery, which he afterwards used so skilfully on several occasions. This time the bait which he chiefly used was a slice of the Rhenish Provinces of Prussia. Not that he would ever have handed over an inch of German ground to France; but he believed that by the mere suggestion he could sufficiently dazzle Napoleon to retard and confuse his action. ~~It has often been said that the character of Napoleon III is a mystery; Bismarck, at least, had the key to that enigma. He seems to have rather liked Napoleon, and we may have a sympathetic understanding for those we like.~~

As to Great Britain, Bismarck had two plans in view.

Even before the Polish incident, he relied upon the essential weakness of almost every British government—the extreme unwillingness of a wealthy and contented commercial nation to enter upon a European War. Just as he dangled Rhenish Prussia before the French Emperor, he dangled the idea of Peace before the British ministers. He

(23) He also made attempts to sow ill-feeling against France in Britain; for example, he told Wodehouse, when the latter visited Berlin in December, that France was secretly proposing to Russia a conference on Denmark from which Great Britain was to be excluded. (Wodehouse to Russell, 13.12.63. F.O. Denmark, 306.)
December.

36.
 assured them that Prussia did not want a war, and that the German Diet was the real representative of the war party. He himself would do his best to restrain the Diet from any militant action. He was, he said, torn between his desire for peace, and the sense of his duty to obey the Diet as a member of the German Confederation. He did, in very truth, use his influence to restrain the Diet, for he wished that if any armed attack on Denmark were made, it should be made by Prussian troops acting independently, and not by Federal troops under the orders of the Diet. By this conciliatory policy he was able to keep the British government in happy ignorance until his own plans for a Prussian attack were matured. All the while, with infinite care and patience, he pressed upon them the idea that, anxious as he was personally for peace, the strength of public opinion in Germany, and above all the unreasonable and aggressive attitude of Denmark, might force him into war against his will.

24)

Besides his scheme of deceiving Britain until action upon her part became difficult, he was aware that he could count upon a strong opposition in that country itself to any militant projects on the part of Russell and Palmerston. It was not on the parliamentary Opposition that he relied, for the Conservative leaders sympathised with Denmark: but he knew that there was

24) "Probably nothing would give greater strength...to the two great German powers than the feeling that Great Britain and France were disposed to act as mediators to give the ~~impartial~~ question of the Duchies an impartial consideration." Cowley to F.O., 6 Jan. 1864, F.O. France, 1499. Etc, etc.

dissension in the Cabinet, and he knew ~~from certain sources~~ ^{a woman of great determination,} that the Queen, ~~whose determined character was known,~~ was devoted to the cause of Germany, for the King of the Belgians had assured the Prussian royal family of this. German in blood and in character, Victoria had been even more closely ^{143.} drawn to that country by her marriage. Prince Albert had ^{56.} imbibed the principles of the German ~~liberals~~ ⁽²⁵⁾, and he was related to, and his brother was on affectionate terms with, the Augustenburg family. Stockmar had tutored both Queen and Prince on the question, and Victoria regarded it as a holy legacy left to her by her husband. She and her brother-in-law had adopted the views of the National Liberals: the Duchies should become a little independent state, ruled by an Augustenburg dynasty, and a member of a new and strengthened German Confederation. ⁽²⁶⁾ This point of view was of course most ^{144.} offensive to Bismarck: ~~(He would have preferred that the~~ ^{57.} ~~Duchies remain with Denmark).~~ But the Queen was not aware of this, nor indeed did she as yet believe that Bismarck had much influence in the matter. So long as she acted as a check on the policy of her ministers, whenever it became aggressive, /

⁽²⁵⁾ See, for example, ~~Morley's~~ Gladstone, p. 736. "She spoke of all this with intense earnestness, and said she considered it a legacy from him".

⁽²⁶⁾ She said to Lord Torrington, "I would pledge my honour that The King of Prussia will take nothing." Dasent's Delane, Vol. II, p. 109.

II,

aggressive, she served Bismarck's turn. She had her own party in the Cabinet, having found a strong ally in Lord Granville, ^{who} He had always been a favourite of hers, since he had replaced the insubordinate and disgraced Palmerston in stormy '51. (He now acted as a drag upon the movements of Russell and Palmerston.)

Mr. Puss's methods were unassuming, but very adequate. 145
 58 Johnny and Cupid made strenuous efforts to evade his pervasive influence. He would quietly remonstrate in Council, and then relapse into silence. They would take silence for consent, sneak away, and take the proposed action. Then Mr Puss would present a written protest, strictly moderate and correct, and the dispatches which had been sent would have to be cancelled. A quiet hint about "Her Majesty's views" was introduced, when necessary, with effect, for everyone knew that Granville was in constant private correspondence with the Queen. ^(27.) This explains the extraordinary devious course of British diplomacy, especially in 1864, the contradictory instructions and cancelled dispatches which puzzled harassed ambassadors. 146

Palmerston had been the person chiefly responsible

for/

(27) * See Fitzmaurice's Granville, vol. 1. Chap. VII. "We are, alas, detested in Germany... The Queen asks the Cabinet to be firm and support her". "She would be prepared to make a stand upon it, should it even cause the resignation of Lord Russell". etc, etc.

for the Treaty of London, and he and Russell regarded the preservation of the Danish Monarchy intact as essential to the peace of Europe. The consequences feared from a break-up of the Monarchy were not quite those which might be expected to-day. They did not fear the rise of Germany as a naval power; no one took this to be a serious possibility. Even Lord Robert Cecil, while clearly pointing out the naval aspirations of Germany, 28) mocked unmercifully at her power of fulfilling them. People still remembered the collapse of Germany in 1850, and the sale 147. of her fleet by public auction. What the government really dreaded was the rise of a great sea-power in the form of a United Scandinavia. It was fully expected that Denmark, if deprived of the Duchies, would join herself to Sweden-Norway, and in this way a formidable fleet might soon dominate the north. This was frequently urged by Paget, the British Ambassador at Copenhagen, who believed in the growing power of Pan-Scandinavianism. 29) If this danger did not materialise. Denmark as a naval power would cease to exist, and in this case the control of the 148. Baltic would fall to Russia, and this was even more repugnant to the British government.

When, therefore, they urged the importance of the preservation of Denmark, it was not from any fear of the increased power of Germany. They looked, mostly, with a vague benignity on the German struggle for unity. They were hugely contemptuous of the weakness, confusion, and futility that her champions had hitherto displayed, but all the same they wished her well.

28) See his "Danish Duchies," in Historical Essays.

29) "It is impossible that the establishment of two strong maritime powers, Prussia on the one side, Scandinavia on the other, at the entrance of the Baltic, can be otherwise than prejudicial to

~~principles and fling open all her markets to British commercial enterprise, setting an example to a world hitherto strangely reluctant to follow the teaching of Cobden. Germany would, above all, act as a counterpoise to Russia and to France.)~~
 • If Germany once took her proper place,
 1 Britain would no longer need to depend on the unnatural French
 64 alliance to preserve the peace of Europe; she and Germany¹⁴⁹ together would hold the other powers in check. (Those who believed in Germany's future argued thus; those who believed Germany would never be a great power had no fear of any gain she might make.)

The ministers who believed in Germany's ^{great} future were chiefly those who had come under the influence of Stockmar and of the Prince Consort. Outside these, the most clear-sighted of Germany's British friends was a young attaché at the embassy in Berlin, who had a peculiar affection for that country, and who was the ardent friend and disciple of the National Liberal
 65 party. This young man saw what few saw. He had spent years in Germany, and ^{knew} ~~saw~~ the strength of some of the forces that ¹⁵⁰ were working there, even if he underestimated that of others. He was convinced that Germany would shortly be, not only one of the great powers, but the greatest on the continent. He disliked and distrusted France, especially Napoleon III, of whose ability he had ~~probably~~ an exaggerated idea, and he considered that the salvation of Europe lay in a German-British alliance.
 For/

29) (ctd.) the interests of Great Britain." This is Paget's most definite expression that he may have feared Russia as well as Scandinavian influence. Paget to F.O., 3 Feb. 1864, F.O. Denmark, 343.

For this object he began to work with an almost fanatical enthusiasm. ⁽³⁰⁾ Fortune gave into the hands of this young Mr Robert Morier a considerable influence on the course of the Danish question, as will shortly be seen, ^{151.} How critical was the time in the history of Germany has already been pointed out. The whole future of the nation was to be decided; she stood at the divergence of two paths, the one that of Liberal Nationalism, pointing the way to constitutional parliamentary government, giving to every man his rights; the other that of the traditional Frederician policy of the strong military monarchy; the policy of big guns; the policy incarnate in the ^{152.} person of Bismarck. The fate of the influences which had governed the spiritual life of the European nations for nearly half a century was in the balance; for so strong was the new power, standing "where the brook and river meet" that as she chose, so she could impress her choice upon the mind of Europe. At the moment it seemed obvious to everyone that she would take the way indicated by the National Liberals. So Mr Morier believed; it was liberal Germany that had won his fond attachment: It was liberal Germany that he eagerly desired for the ally of Britain. ~~(He was bitterly disappointed/~~

⁽³⁰⁾ "I had this (prophetic frenzy) almost to the extent of mania in regard to the Schleswig-Holstein Question...for the three years preceding 1863". "Devoting myself to one idea of this kind (the Anglo-German Alliance)..." etc. etc. See Wemyss's Morier, Vol. 1. pp. 370, 395.

appointed when, as he thought, the advent of Bismarck and his policy gave to Britain a false idea of Germany and German ideals, and so severed the two nations. But was this so false?

Surely there must have been in the National Liberal party, with all its lofty aims and high enthusiasm, some ¹⁵³ essential weakness; or how was it that those aims were so easily defeated, so soon forgotten, so completely submerged by the Bismarckian policy? Looking upon Germany in 1860 and 1872, what a change is here! Where are now the ideals of the past? Save for a few choice spirits, the nation is ready to bow down and worship the man, who, ten years before, was detested as reactionary, absolutist, militarist. (Nothing succeeds like success; but) slight must have been the hold ^{upon} the lofty liberal principles ~~of~~ a nation that could be so completely dazzled by a few years of military and material success, however brilliant. A people so easily led, ¹⁵⁴ so helpless in the grasp of a dominating imperial mind, could never be an ally to be relied upon and preferred to all others. Surely some tendency to this blind worship of material power ^{to} underlay and weakened the purer aspirations of the German mind. This Bismarckian theory of "Blood and Iron", has appeared and reappeared in the history of North Germany; it alone made Prussia the country she is. Even in 1860, some one/

one might have asked, does Prussia really mean to break with the past? Is the unification of Germany really possible on these new lines? But no doubt had yet entered the mind of Robert Morier. ¹⁵⁵ [In the meantime trouble had been steadily growing in the matter of the Danish Constitution.]

N.P. The London Treaty, as ~~has~~ ^{has} already been said, had ⁷¹ been signed by Austria, Prussia, and four of the smaller German states. It had not, however, been presented to the Diet, which therefore was not bound by the treaty; while Austria and Prussia were bound as European powers, but not as members of the German Confederation.

Their public obligations ran contrary to their duty towards the Diet, and they now began to show an unusual ¹⁵⁶ deference to the wishes of that institution, whose desires they as a rule rudely disregarded. The four small powers ⁽³¹⁾ simply repudiated their bond, and, in common with those German ⁷² states which had not signed it, denied the existence of the treaty, and airily referred to it as "the London Protocol".

~~Austria and Prussia had more sense of decency, and~~ Bismarck did not wish to provoke the Western Powers at present and so made a show of deference to his treaty obligations. He said he had no intention of breaking the treaty; but at the same time he declared that Prussia had only signed it in consequence ¹⁵⁷ of the private agreement with Denmark in 1851-

2, /

(31) ~~the~~ Hanover, Saxony, Wurtemberg & Electoral Hesse.

1851-2 that as Denmark had broken that agreement by trying to incorporate Slesvig, Prussia and Austria were ipso facto released from the London Treaty.

38 / The British Government denied this. The agreement of 1851-2 had been a strictly private affair between Denmark and the German powers, on matters affecting Danish internal government. The Treaty of London was one between all the great powers, and a part of the public law of Europe. Austria and Prussia had signed it unconditionally, and had thereby incurred obligations to the other signatory powers, which their private quarrels with Denmark could not in the least¹⁵⁸ affect. Britain, for example, had known nothing of the secret engagements, and however much she might disapprove of Denmark¹⁴ breaking her promises, she could not allow that this released Prussia from her obligations towards Britain.

The British government, therefore, based their policy entirely upon the Treaty of London, and contended only that this should be fulfilled. They did not give any support to Denmark in her nationalist policy. They occasionally pressed her to fulfil her engagements to Germany, but as none of them had ever had time to study the question, they were¹⁵⁹ really not sure whether Denmark had fulfilled these or not. Most of them had never read the text of the engagements.

75'. This was a perfectly reasonable attitude to take up.
It/

~~It is possible that the British ministers might have strengthened their position a little by ignoring all other considerations and giving their whole-hearted support to Denmark upon the question of the constitution also. But still,~~
 A policy based entirely upon the fulfilment of the Treaty of London was a possible and a definite one, and gave some prospect of success, as long as it was held to with determination. In the year 1862, however, this policy was suddenly abandoned by Lord Russell, who entered upon a course ~~(which was)~~ directly contrary to it.

76. It should be understood that on one point the British Government had^v always been vaguely uneasy. The 160 sympathy aroused in the United Kingdom for the German nationalist movement has been described. It was by no means general, but it existed, and it was felt by the ministers themselves. If Holstein and Slesvig were really German - ~~(well you know)~~ ^{then} why, Germany ought to have them, oughtn't she? It was awkward for a British government - always the sympathetic friend of oppressed nationalities - to be in this case on the side of the oppressor. For Russell and Palmerston, with their past record, it was a particularly unpleasant position.
77. They writhed at the occasional thought, that they were being inconsistent and^v false to their principles. Palmerston 161. laughed the accusation off; but to the more sensitive Russell it/

it brought real suffering.

~~The nationalist triumphs of 1860 had strengthened this feeling. (How could they give help to oppressed Italians in Lombardy, and disregard the sufferings of oppressed Germans in Slesvig?)~~ The rumours of Danish tyranny spread, and were enforced by the personal reproaches of the Queen. Lord Russell's distress increased, and can be traced in the growing irritability of his letters; he asked for more information - reports, reports! The reports came, and while those of Mr Paget were enthusiastic for the Danes, those of Mr Ward were equally so for the Germans, and the Foreign Secretary was as uncertain as ever. 162

It was in the year 1862 (while Bismarck was still an unknown quantity), and ⁱⁿ this state of mind, that Lord Russell was summoned to accompany Queen Victoria upon a visit to her brother-in-law at Gotha. He found himself there surrounded by the Liberal leaders and the champions of the Augustenburger; in the very stronghold of German Liberal Nationalism. It seemed to the bewildered old gentleman that 79 for the first time he was learning the truth about the problem that had confused him so long. Possibly he was not insensible to the flattery of being converted by a Grand Duke^v and a Queen. Certainly the atmosphere prepared his mind 162 for the influence of the able statesman who now obtained the mastery/

mastery of it. Mr Robert Morier had been detached from the embassy at Berlin to act as Lord Russell's secretary. He seized his chance. For a few days the young attaché dictated the foreign policy of Great Britain. An extraordinary change appeared to take place in the views of Lord Russell, and the political world was startled by the famous "Gotha Dispatch".

"Lord Russell is getting us into all sorts of complications . . ." wrote Lord Derby to Lord Malmesbury, "What on earth does he mean by turning round on Denmark, and taking up all at once the Prussian views about the Duchies?"¹⁶⁴ He added that the dispatch was "extraordinarily offensive". It was, in fact, a complete reversal of policy, and was expressed in Russell's most impertinent and dictatorial style. It proposed to Denmark, that "Holstein should have all that Germany demands for her", (he did not specify Germany's demands, and indeed that would have been difficult, as they had never been exactly formulated) that Slesvig should be completely self-governing, and not be represented in the Rigsgaad; and, in fine, that the affairs of the Danish monarchy should be conducted by¹⁶⁵ four independent assemblies of equal authority, all of whom were to have an equal control over finance: while, as a fantastically delightful climax, the Danish army was to be reduced to its strength in 1841. The form of the dispatch hinted, that if these terms were not accepted, /

(32) 31 October 1862. Malmesbury II p. 285.

(32) "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister."

accepted, Denmark could not count with the same certainty as before upon the friendship of Britain.

39 The most curious point about this curious affair is that Russell took the dispatch quite seriously. It did not strike him, either that his scheme was an impossible one, or that in proposing it to a sovereign state he was offering that state an insult. He who was in truth the "only begetter" of the document was not so deluded. Morier, as he afterwards confessed, saw that the dispatch was drawn up in terms that Denmark could not possibly accept. He then arranged that the dispatch be first submitted to the German powers, and exercised all his influence that the terms should be accepted by them, for, as Denmark was certain to refuse, he wished Germany to have the credit of assenting though he was aware that the terms would not have satisfied her. The two countries were thus posed for Lord Russell's benefit, Germany as conciliating and pacific, Denmark as determined on a quarrel and rudely rejecting the brilliant solution which he had offered her, and which he regarded as entirely his own invention. Poor Lord Russell! his feelings were seriously hurt, and he probably never quite forgave the Danes for their refusal. He returned to England, morally convinced that Denmark had broken her pledge to Germany, was oppressing/

(33) For Morier's part in the dispatch, see ^{Morier} Wemyss, Vol. I., Chap. 15.

oppressing the Slesvig Germans, and was so obstinate and unreasonable that there was no dealing with her. Probably, ¹⁶⁸ also, Morier had impressed on his mind some idea of the value of Germany as a friend, and her danger as an enemy. The enforcement of the Treaty of London had become, to him, a rather unpleasant duty; but he still meant to hold to it, if possible, - especially when he came once more under the influence of the more strong-minded Palmerston.

85. He did not see that he had irreparably weakened the position of his Government. He had, in fact, practically abandoned the strong position once held. He had admitted the German contention that if Denmark did not fulfil her engagements to Germany, she could not ¹⁶⁹ claim that the great powers were bound to enforce the Treaty of London. * (34)

The Danes had been wounded by the terms of the dispatch, but they were as far from apprehending its full significance as was Russell himself. Denmark had put up with a good deal from her patronising and tactless friend, but only ¹⁷⁰ because she had not the slightest doubt that she could rely on that friend in the moment of real danger. Had not British statesmen protested a hundred times that the integrity of the Danish monarchy was essential to the balance of power and the peace of Europe? Russell, after this outbreak, appeared to relapse into calmness again, and both he and Palmerston were/

(34) * Manderström, the Swedish minister, said later that Russell's dispatch had "been extremely injurious to the Danish ~~Government~~ cause, as encouraging Germany upon a point which Denmark had never failed to regard as vitally objectionable."
F.O. Sweden. 333. ^{December.} 15-12. 1863.

were pledged to the London Treaty. The Danes realised however, that the British lion was already flickering his tail with impatience, and that they could gain nothing by protracting the affair longer, and they believed that they 87 could find no more suitable moment to "take arms, and by opposing, end it". Something must be done. The latest claim of Holstein was that no law should run in any part of the monarchy unless it had been voted by the estates of the duchy - in other words, that "the administration of the 171 whole monarchy would vest in the Estates of Holstein". All the laws and the budget for the year were therefore submitted to her, and she simultaneously rejected them all, adding the pleasing intelligence that "it was impossible for the Danish government to draw up a project for a common constitution 88 with which they would be satisfied", and demanding a return to the state of affairs of 1848. The deadlock was worse than ever. Would it not be better to make a bold stroke for a wholly Danish solution? When could a more favourable 172 opportunity be hoped for?

This object, to which the next steps of the Danish government were due, was at first concealed; but later **M.** Hall, the Danish Premier, frankly avowed it to Sir Augustus Paget. "His Excellency went on to observe that although a war with Germany would undoubtedly be a misfortune now as at any/

any time, the present moment was perhaps as favourable for Denmark and as unfavourable for Germany as any that would occur; that it was impossible for Denmark to live under a continual menace of hostilities; that Sweden was with her; that the public feeling of England, France, and Europe in general was roused in favour of Denmark . . . H.E. continued, the question must be settled by an appeal to arms, it had better be so now, and he felt convinced, he said, that Denmark and Sweden would not stand alone. . . " Long before this, Mr Lytton had written from Copenhagen, "I cannot . . . disguise my general impression, that the apparent languor with which the Danish Government continues to follow, with only fretful protest or grudging submission, that stream of events which seems now to be hurrying this country into open conflict with the Federal Power, is in a great measure caused by the conviction that Denmark is a geographical necessity in Europe, and that in the event of renewed hostilities with Germany, England or France, or both these powers together, will be compelled to defend in arms the integrity of the monarchy. However well founded may be this conviction, the effect of it on the minds of the Danish ministry is, I think, to be regretted".

This/

(35.)
 Paget to Lord Russell, 14.10.1863. F.O. Denmark. 304.
 (36.)
 Lytton to Russell, 11.3.63. F.O. Denmark. 304.

This belief of the Danes was not without foundation. It has already been shown that ^{They} ~~she~~ had ~~the~~ strongest hopes of a close alliance with Sweden. ^{They} ~~she~~ had also received encouraging messages from France. But ^{they} ~~she~~ relied chiefly^{175.} on Britain, and Britain was definitely pledged to support ^{Denmark} ~~her~~, in spite of Russell's recent falling-off. As if to give a further guarantee of this, a marriage was now negotiated between the Prince of Wales, and the daughter of Prince Christian of Glucksburg, the heir, according to the Treaty of London, to ^{92.} the Danish monarchy.

⁴⁰ Besides this, the general feeling of Europe appeared to be on Denmark's side. It was not yet known that Russia was pledged to Prussia. Italy was intensely hostile to Austria, and therefore, in this case, to Germany. Holland followed the Danish movements with the ~~intense~~ ^{176.} sympathy of one similarly situated. ⁽³⁷⁾

(As regards these powers, it must be admitted that the attitude of the Danish government was not unreasonable.)

✓ In the winter of 1862-3, when ^{The Danes} their plans ~~were~~ laid, it could not be expected that they should anticipate the Polish crisis ^{93.} which was to destroy the grounds for most of these hopes, to shatter the concert of the Western powers, and to bring Prussia and Russia into the closest union.

In regard to Germany itself, however, there is ~~much~~ less/

(37) Holland occupied the same position towards Germany, with regard to Luxembourg and Limburg, as Denmark did with regard to Holstein.

less excuse for the mistaken calculations of the Danes. They, like others, left Bismarck out of ^{count} ~~their plans~~ altogether; but more than that, they greatly underestimated the strength of Germany. They acted as if she were in the same state as in ¹⁷⁷ 1848, shaken by the conflict of revolution and reaction. They ignored the vast material and moral advance she had made [✓] since that time. They ignored the fact that Prussia was arming, and was distributing to her men a gun of a new and superior type. One cannot avoid the conclusion, that Denmark never seriously believed that matters would come to open war. She made no attempt to put her defences in readiness, and her army was unprepared.

~~For this, too, the excuse to be offered is that the~~ ^{She certainly} ~~quarrel over Poland could not be anticipated. Denmark had a~~ ^{grounds for} ~~right to believe~~ ^{my} that Prussia would retreat before determined action on the part of Britain and France together, and that hostilities would never actually break out. But she relied ⁹⁸ too confidently on this, and too much disdained the preparations going on at Berlin.

~~Bismarck did not want to fight Britain; but Bismarck~~ was assuredly getting ready to fight somebody.

Apart from this fundamental mistake, the Danish policy was carried out with some ability. The Eider-Dane ministry now in power decided to begin its campaign in the spring/

spring of 1863. The King's health was giving rise to some anxiety, and unless a conflict was to be deliberately provoked, the constitutional question must be settled before¹⁷⁹ his death. Hall did not wish to be violent or unreasonable. 96 He wished to conciliate Germany as far as possible by following the old EiderDane policy of abandoning Holstein to German influence, and accordingly, on the 30th of March, a Royal Patent was issued, which separated Holstein from Denmark completely, save for the dynastic union.

Had Germany really been actuated by an unselfish desire for the welfare of Holstein, she could not have asked anything further for the duchy. Holstein was given complete autonomy, and her financial position was eminently satisfactory. Short of¹⁸⁰ actually in so many words offering to cede the province, Denmark could not have said so frankly 97 ly that she was willing to give up all claim on Holstein in return for a free hand in Slesvig. It was a repudiation of the engagements of 1852, but it was also an offer at compromise. (~~Slesvig for us, Holstein for you~~)

If the Patent had proposed to incorporate Holstein and deprive ~~(all)~~ her population of civic rights, it would not have been received with more indignation in Germany. The administrative benefits conferred, the offer, as it practically was, to resign Holstein, were both ignored, and governments, /

governments, people, and press^v concentrated on the point that the Patent involved the incorporation of Slesvig - which, in practice,^v though not in theory, it did. The Diet met and at once demanded the withdrawal of the Patent, on pain of a Federal Execution in Holstein.

Bismarck tried to throw oil on the troubled waters. He was not insincere; he did not wish events to move too fast. The Danes had pointed out that, as Slesvig was not a German province, a federal execution undertaken on the point of the incorporation of Slesvig amounted to an act of war against Denmark; and a war provoked by the Diet at this moment would enrage Europe. War must not begin until Prussia was ready to act; until it could appear to be entirely the fault of Denmark; and until Britain and France could be bought or frightened off. Bismarck, then, did his best to prevent the Diet from taking this extreme action, and for a time was successful.

It was now that fortune so signally favoured him, and in summer, while correspondence relative to the Patent was flying all over Europe, occurred the Polish incident, with its consequences of a rupture between Britain and France, and shock to British prestige. The relief for Bismarck must have been immense. The situation was completely altered, and in his favour. He could now rely on the friendship of Russia, and he had lost most of his fear for the Western Powers. More than/

Russell and Palmerston

than this, ~~Britain herself was~~ happily unaware of the extent of the change. ~~Russell and Palmerston~~ ^{They} believed that France was only temporarily estranged, ~~and~~ were quite ignorant of the Russo-Prussian understanding, and continued, indeed, until well on into 1864, to believe that they could persuade Russia to act with them. There was in fact an almost childlike confidence on the part of the British ministers; they seemed to believe that all other powers must be willing to forgive and forget the past as soon as they wished to "kiss and be friends." Even they, however, could not be altogether blind to the fact that some change had occurred, though they could not define it. They felt that for some reason the danger of war had increased, and they became almost hysterically anxious to avert it. Yet they had ~~sacrificed~~ ^{surrendered} their weapons. They did not see that Bismarck, and indeed all Germany, wanted a war, and that the fear of the Western Powers was all that held him in check; and they deliberately threw away the chance of concerted action with France.

Their initial mistake was to suppose that Bismarck had the same desire for peace as an absolute good as they had themselves. Bismarck was destitute of that quality that makes a man regard anything as in itself good or desirable. To him, peace was in some cases preferable to war; and war was in some cases preferable to peace: it was a matter of convenience. To the/

the point of view that regarded war as a crime, he was a stranger. (He knew that there are times when war is useful; 103 when it is necessary; it may be the easiest way out of a difficult situation, or the only way to safeguard the life and honour of the nation.) He would never have made war out of wantonness; that would have been extravagant; but he would not hesitate to provoke one if he thought the game was worth the candle. (This empirical attitude of mind, which was one of Bismarck's most striking qualities, the British ministers had not yet realised.)

41 It is curious that the representatives of a nation which had so consistently and pugnaciously defended its rights should have so strongly disapproved the eagerness 104 of foreign peoples to take arms for theirs. The way in which, for example, British statesmen continually protested their desire to see Venetia Italian, and as continually deprecated any attempt to regain it by war, must have caused some amusement to their Italian contemporaries, for it was obvious that Venetia would never become Italian except as the prize of war. The idea of a nationalist war as a holy war, a thing to be desired in itself, was wholly 187. foreign to the well-governed and tolerant minds of the Victorian ministers; They did not realise that there were 105. actually young men in Italy and in Germany who longed to die/

die for their country far more intensely than they themselves had ever longed for a seat in the Cabinet. Yet it was their business to understand that such a spirit existed in Germany, and that it was made stronger and more sinister by being allied to a spirit of conquest and to racial hatred. The capacity for hate is one largely lacking to the English^{✓ 188.} character, which is quick to forget the past, and generous in admiring the good qualities of an enemy. A long period of depression and humiliation had, however, strongly developed this[✓] capacity in the German mind. There can be doubt that 106. British statesmen underrated the German hatred for Denmark, as they afterwards underrated the German hatred for France.

Besides this, a war undertaken for the purpose of territorial expansion was peculiarly repugnant to them. The acquisitions which Great Britain steadily continued to make in all parts of the world were made against the will of the government - sceptical though foreign states^{✓ 189.} might be of this. It was the fashion of the day in England to regard colonies as undesirable encumbrances, troublesome and expensive. In 107 Europe, no temptations of this sort were offered to Britain. Her ministers failed to sympathise with or even to understand those less fortunate nations whom geographical circumstances compelled or tempted to a policy of aggression. Italia Irredenta - the Rhine Frontier - United Germany-- these were words which unlocked, not a cave of treasures, but/

but a very Pandora's box of troubles. They did not realise how far national enthusiasm could be kindled by such phrases, and that men might¹⁹⁰ actually prefer to conquer their desires at the point of the sword. To them, a war on the part of 108. Italy for Venetia was reckless and blamable; a war by France for the Rhine was lunatic greed; and a war by Germany for Holstein was ^{almost} equally reprehensible; (a war for Slesvig did not yet enter into their calculations.) It shook the whole fabric of their political creed. Till now, France had been the aggressor, the troubler of the European dove-cots. They did not wish to consider Germany in this role. They wished Germany to remain the¹⁹¹ blameless, safe make-weight to France.

The wish is father to the thought. They continued to blind themselves to the true aims of Prussia long after 109 the rest of Europe was awake to them. France, Sweden, and Denmark herself were at least aware that the question was no longer one of the status of Holstein and Slesvig in the Danish monarchy, but whether those duchies were to be Danish or German. Had the welfare of Holstein only been in question, the offers of the Danish government would not have been so uniformly and passionately rejected; some attempt at compromise would have¹⁹² been made. Both Denmark and Sweden ~~made some efforts~~ ^{tried} to put this before the British government, and some of Britain's own envoys did the same.

"The/

"The Slesvig-Holstein question", wrote Mr Gordon,
 110 "Is the one subject with regard to which German unity is a
 reality". ^{#(38)} and Paget reported, "One of my German acquaintances
 observed the other day to one who reported it to me, that no
 sacrifice, no concession, no fulfilment of engagements on the
 part of the Danish Government would now satisfy the German
 governments nor arrest the movement in Germany; that what
 Germany¹⁹³ looked to and was determined on was the dismemberment
 of the Danish monarchy, in order to place the duchies of
 Slesvig and Holstein, with the ports belonging to them, in the
 111 hands of a Prince (be he^v whom he may) devoted to the interests
 of Germany". This was confirmed by the fact that ^{when} the eldest
 son of Duke of Augustenburg, who had renounced his claims to the
 sovereignty of the duchies, ~~now~~ declared that he himself was
 not bound by his father's renunciation, and renewed his pre-
 tensions, The Diet refused to acknowledge the Treaty Of
 London, and began to consider ^{his} ~~the~~ claims, of the Augustenburger,
 an act which Denmark¹⁹⁴ declared to be an unjustifiable inter-
 ference with her private affairs, as even the rights of the
 Confederation over Holstein did not give the Diet any authority
 112 to settle the question of the succession. It was clear that
 a Federal Execution in Holstein, undertaken by a government
 that refused to acknowledge Prince Christian's right to the
 Danish Crown, would amount to an act of war.

But/

(38)

Bluebook.

Gordon
 C. Gordon to F. O. 18 Sept.
 1863.

But the British government refused to act upon these warnings. It is true that they began to bully and threaten the smaller German states; but they continued to "hope that M. de Bismarck would effectually promote the work of peace".⁽³⁹⁾ They did not realise that since the Polish affair¹⁹⁵ their threats of action were merely laughed at, though Sir A. Malet⁽⁴⁰⁾ warned them that the Diet did not believe in the possibility of British action. They made no plans about what they would do if their warnings were disregarded, ~~(They continued to pray for peace)~~^{they} and put pressure on Denmark to withdraw the Patent of March 30. The Danish Government tried to convince them that Germany was determined on war; that concessions on this point could only avert an outbreak for a short time; and that, according to their views, it would be better to provoke the conflict at once¹⁹⁶ and so put an end to an intolerable situation. But Britain¹¹³ continued to believe in the possibility of compromise.

The Polish debacle had already had results unfavourable to Denmark in the Baltic. Russia was dropping gentle hints to Sweden, and accordingly Sweden began to make excuses to put off the final signature of the alliance with Denmark. Hamilton and the King were still friendly, but the prudent Manderström/

(40) British minister at Frankfort.

(39) Oct.
Russell, 21. 10. 63. F.O. Denmark, 30B.

42

42

Manderström was growing a little cool. At the same time Russell began to feel the unpleasant consequences of the rupture with France. He wished France to join him in his protests against the German attitude to the Treaty of London; but M. Drouyn de Lhuys replied, with a malicious pleasure, that France was certainly not going to expose herself to another humiliation such as she had received in the case of Poland. She would join in no threats and protests, unless she got an absolute guarantee that Britain was ready to go to war to enforce them; ⁽⁴¹⁾ and

Even then - it was not an affair that concerned France directly; the Emperor was not at ease about the Nationality question. France would not move without some inducement. 198.

Russell then redoubled his efforts to persuade the Danes to withdraw the Royal Patent. This was for a long time refused; the Danes pointed out that the Patent practically embodied the advice given by Russell himself, before his visit to Gotha. ~~(He was obliged to resort to coercion before they would yield)~~. At last he made the distinct/

(41) "If England and France were to address such a reminder... to Austria, and Prussia, and the German Confederation, they must be prepared to go further, and to adopt a course of action more in accordance with the dignity of two great Powers than they were now doing in the Polish Question". (Bluebook 18.9.63.)

"When he (Drouyn de Lhuys) looked round to see who could be the possible allies of France, in defence of Denmark, he found none that could be counted on... The question of Poland had shown that Great Britain could not be relied upon when a war was in the distance." (Cowley, 31.12.63. F.O., France, 1499.)

6 F.O. Dec.

distinct statement that though Britain wished Denmark well, she would give her no military aid unless the Patent was withdrawn. The Danes regarded this as a promise that if the Patent were withdrawn, and war still followed, the military aid would be forthcoming, ~~and~~ they at last consented, in November 1863, and the Patent was revoked. 199.

The constitutional question was still to be settled, however, and a new constitution was already drawn up, which, as was inevitable if Denmark were not to submit altogether to Germany, followed the same lines as the Patent. It was a liberal and even democratic scheme of government, but it also abandoned Holstein to German influence, separated it completely from the rest of the monarchy, and it allowed Slesvig to be represented in the Rigsraad, and therefore inevitably pointed to its ultimate absorption in Denmark. This constitution was now ready for signature. The Danish minister at Berlin was commissioned to ask whether Count Bismarck had any objection to its being promulgated - for the Danes were beginning to realise that it was Bismarck's attitude that was important for them. He expressed no objection, and it was accordingly decided that the constitution be laid before the king, for signature. 200.

From this point affairs moved rapidly. The British cabinet/

cabinet was now frantic with anxiety. The revocation of the Patent, from which they hoped so much, had had no effect whatever; instead of being softened and conciliated, Germany seemed more angry than ever - the threat of a federal execution was for the moment suspended,²⁰ but the popular outcry for war, and the agitation in favour of the Augustenburg claim, ^{were} ~~was~~ more violent than before. The tone of the British despatches was now alternately threatening and coaxing. The Diet, once so contemptuously ignored, was in turn abused and flattered. The little German states which had repudiated the London Treaty were bitterly reproached with faithlessness. ~~(a reproach which only served to annoy them.)~~ Prussia and Austria were, in one letter, cajoled, fondled, and bribed; in the next, they were solemnly threatened with war. Russia and France were in vain appealed to. Denmark was accused of obstinacy and ill-faith. And still the situation was²⁰² as gloomy as ever! In their excitement the ministers went further than the²¹ cabinet had authorised them, and war was openly threatened. The German states were informed that their actions would have the most serious consequences to the peace of Europe; that Britain would not regard any attack on the integrity of the Danish monarchy with indifference, and finally, Palmerston, in the House of Commons, declared that if Germany refused to keep the Treaty of London, "she would find/

find that it was not with Denmark alone that she had to contend". This speech caused quite a flutter in political circles, and Denmark, of course, hailed it with joy, as the British government were now definitely pledged to her support. Bismarck, however, appeared insensible to the menace. He had now changed his tune, and was protesting to Britain that the Diet and the Liberals had quite got beyond his control, and that the only chance to preserve his master's throne was to yield to their desire for war. This picture of Bismarck as a frail craft swept onwards by the current of revolution is a very pleasing one. 203

The Danish kings made a practice of dying at inconvenient ^{times} ~~moments~~. Frederick VII chose this moment to expire - leaving the new constitution unsigned. 204

There was a momentary lull; Christian IX was quietly proclaimed in kingdom and duchies, the only opposition coming from the professors of Kiel University and a few Holstein lawyers. No one else refused the oath of allegiance.

~~But~~ In spite of these apparently happy omens, the new king found himself faced with a frightful problem. He was German, and he was aware of the strength of German feeling; he was convinced that to sign the constitution meant war. But his new subjects, owing to his German blood, suspected him; if he refused his signature, his own

205.
123. ministers/

ministers warned him that an instant revolution would sweep him from the throne. The Danish people were determined that the national policy should not be abandoned. ⁽⁴²⁾

The king gave way; he signed the constitution.

The same dreary course was now gone through once more. Again the Diet fell into convulsions, again threatened a federal execution, and again Britain told Denmark that she would give no military assistance unless the constitution were revoked. ~~(though this was contrary to the public announcement made by Palmerston)~~

⁴³ But to revoke the constitution was no easy matter. ~~it was, in fact, an impossibility.~~ Denmark had been ¹²⁴ governed, for the last twelve years, practically by the royal authority; but the publication of the constitution had ²⁰⁶ made her a constitutional country again. The Patent of March 30 had been issued by the king, and could be withdrawn by the exercise of the royal power. But the constitution was now the law of the land, and could only be repealed by the Rigsraad itself, and that Rigsraad had still to be summoned and elected. Any attempt to repeal before the meeting of the Rigsraad would be an illegal resumption of arbitrary ¹²⁸ power on the part of the crown, and would inevitably provoke a revolution among a nation which had for ²⁰⁷ years been clamouring for liberal institutions. ⁽⁴³⁾

Moreover, /

^{Nov.} Paget, 18.11.63. F.O. Denmark. 304.

⁽⁴²⁾ "Upon the decision now to be taken by the king depend not only His Majesty's future popularity...but consequences of a far graver importance affecting monarchical institutions in this country." (Paget, 18.11.63. F.O. Denmark, 303.)

Moreover, M. Hall was pledged to the support of his own constitution. In reply to the arguments of the British government, he pointed out that there was no probability that the repeal of the constitution would satisfy Germany any more than the revocation of the Patent; and moreover, that Britain "offered him no equivalent for the concession we advised, not even the certainty that the whole question would be referred to a congress". Denmark had already made many concessions 126 to please Great Britain; why should all the concessions be upon her side?

The constitution²⁰⁸ was not revoked, and the Diet ordered the federal execution to take place.

The situation of Denmark had now become frightfully serious. ~~The Swedish minister~~ Manderström, was by this time convinced that neither Britain nor France were likely to help Denmark, and he decided to break off the negotiations for an alliance, which he had protracted until now. Hamilton hurried home to Sweden to protest; finding that he could not persuade Manderström, he, considering that his personal honour was pledged to the alliance, resigned his post. (H4)

127. This loss made Denmark cling more desperately to the friendship²⁰⁹ of Britain, and she yielded to the wishes of that country - not, indeed, as to the constitution, for that was impossible; but when Russell again wrote that no military

(H4) "I learnt from Count Hamilton that the project of treaty between Sweden and Denmark which only awaited signature to give it effect has now been laid aside. Count Hamilton attributed this to something which had passed between Your Excellency relative to the possible exclusion of Sweden from a Conference which it might be necessary to hold respecting the question of succession if the definitive alliance with Sweden had been signed. (Paget 9.12.63. F.O. Denmark, 305.)

aid would be forthcoming if any resistance was made to the federal execution in Holstein, she consented to withdraw her troops and allow the forces of the Diet to occupy the duchy without resistance. ⁽⁴⁵⁾ She publicly protested, however, that this was due only to her desire for peace, as the execution, being undertaken upon the point of the position of Slesvig, was illegal. In the meantime, the Prince of Augustenburg was proclaimed Duke in Holstein, with the countenance, and ²¹⁰ even the encouragement, of the federal troops. The German states refused to receive the envoys of King Christian, and the Diet refused to admit his representative to its counsels.

Bismarck now began to show his hand. He had long been preparing the Prussian army for action, and he suddenly threw off the cloak of moderation, declared that the constitution was contrary to the engagements of 1851-2, and ~~declared~~ ²¹¹ that if it were not withdrawn before the 1st of January, 1864, the forces of Prussia and Austria would enter Slesvig.

It will be remembered that Bismarck had seen the constitution before it was published, and not only "did not object, but, on the contrary, spoke in a sense to lead to the conclusion that the measure of the Danish Government was in accordance with his views". ⁽⁴⁶⁾

⁽⁴⁵⁾ "I replied that Denmark would at all events have a better chance of securing the assistance of the powers alluded to by retiring beyond the limits of the Confederation." (Paget, replying to Hall, 10.12.63. F.O. Denmark, 305.)

⁽⁴⁶⁾ "Nothing which had passed in the negotiations with M. de Bismarck could lead to the belief that he objected to the constitution in question... All that had passed had been with respect to the Normal Budget, and respecting this everything which M. de Bismarck had required had been fulfilled." (Paget, 18.11.63. F.O. Denmark, 304.)

The Danish government, in response to British appeals, now made a large concession. Hall resigned; and a new ministry was formed under Bishop Monrad and the able diplomatist Quaade. The new ministry was equally Eider-Dane in policy - unless it had been composed of foreigners it would have been difficult to avoid this, as the whole Danish nation was now Eider-Dane, and the Holstein leaders had refused to form a ministry when appealed to by the king - but it was not pledged to the support of the constitution, as was Hall. A conciliatory answer was then returned to Prussia. It was impossible to repeal the constitution before the date named, as that would involve illegal action; but the government would instantly summon the Rigsraad, which could be assembled by February, and would lay before it a proposal to repeal. They could promise nothing more.

131. Bismarck replied, and so did the British government, that this was a mere pretext. If the Danes desired, they could easily find some legal loophole, by which the constitution could be withdrawn by the required date. The fact that this would almost certainly produce a revolution was ignored. The Danes complained that Bismarck excused all his own actions on the grounds of "popular pressure", but when they did the same, called it "a mere pretext". But Bismarck was never troubled by accusations of inconsistency. The British/

British government, equally easy-minded, now for the third time refused military aid, unless the constitution were ⁽⁴⁷⁾ repealed. The Danes might by now have become sceptical about the "military aid", which progressively withdrew before them, like the end of the rainbow: ²¹⁴ But gloomy as the situation appeared, they could not bring themselves to believe that Britain would break her public pledge, ignore two treaties, ⁽⁴⁸⁾ and abandon Denmark to her fate. Not even the presence of a special envoy from Britain could convince them of this. Lord Wodehouse, an ambitious but incompetent young Englishman, had been sent first to Berlin, to moderate the fervour of Bismarck, and now to Copenhagen, ostensibly to attend the ¹³³ funeral of the late king, but really to enforce the withdrawal of the constitution by these threats. ²¹⁵

He failed in both cases. Bismarck merely remarked that "Germany would never be on good terms with Denmark ⁽⁴⁴⁾ as long as the present democratic institutions of Denmark were maintained". While in Copenhagen, though he definitely threatened that Britain would desert her ally, the harassed Danish ministers only repeated that they could not in honour ^{go/}

⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Treaty of London, and the Treaty of 1722, in which Britain guaranteed the Gottorp portion of Slesvig; this was evaded by the British government on the pretext that it did not guarantee the royal portion of that duchy, but only the Gottorp portion.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Palmerston told M. de Bille that "un grand pays comme la Russie pouvait à la rigueur se conduire en Pologne comme bon lui semblait, mais qu'un petit pays devait respecter ses engagements, et que le Danemark, en manquant aux siens, s'exposait à soulever la reprobation de l'Europe, et s'attirer sur lui les plus grands dangers. M. de Bille qualifiait d'outrageante pour le Danemark la comparaison que Lord Palmerston avait cherché à établir entre la position du Slesvig et celle de la Pologne. Il se montrait fort blessé..." de la Tour d'Auvergne, 25.1.64. Les Origines². See also Russell to Paget, telegram, 19.12.63. F.O. Denmark. 299.

go beyond their promise to summon the Rigsraad.

The interval passed; and, ~~the Prussian~~

~~the~~ the Prussian Uhlan appeared upon ~~the~~ borders of Sleswig.

Denmark sent a last appeal to London; she called to mind the many concessions she had made at the wish of Great Britain, last of all the evacuation of Holstein, which now placed her at a great military disadvantage in face of her enemies.

The reply was a cold denial that the British government had ever promised military assistance to Denmark. Sir Augustus Paget reported the delivery of the letter, in terms which may be called concise.

"In obedience to Your Lordship's despatch of the 19th instant, I have read that despatch to M. Quaade, and have given him a copy of it. His Excellency made no comment, either while I was reading or when I delivered to him the copy". (49) 92

49 Bluebook. Paget to F.O. 26 February 1864.

A. A. W. Ramsay
Chap. II (cont.)

IV,

~~VII.~~

The British government had made no promises. They²¹⁷ had only said that they were not indifferent; that the peace of Europe was endangered; that Denmark would ^{not} fight alone. They had persuaded Denmark to humiliate herself, weaken her moral position and sacrifice her defensive frontier by concessions, not by promising to help her if she did so, but by saying they would not help her if she did not. It was not their fault if Denmark (and indeed Europe) had misunderstood these statements.

It soon appeared that the difficulties of the statesmen were not over. Surprise was now the order of the day. The first shock was given by the Prussian needle-gun.²¹⁸ The Danish army, inexperienced, ill-armed, without food, without shelter either from the Baltic winter or the ceaseless bombardment, without even being able to return the enemy's fire, as the needle-gun outranged all theirs, yet managed to hold their first defensible position at Dybbøl until it became a heap of rubbish, and then made good their retreat to the island of Alsens. But all Slesvig was now in the hands of the enemy, and the issue of the combat was obvious to all, whether to panic-stricken Copenhagen, or to the two unhappy old men in London.²¹⁹

The second surprise was the policy of Prussia. She entirely/

entirely repudiated the control of the Diet, declared she was acting for herself, not for Germany, maintained that the outbreak of war had cancelled her obligations under the London Treaty, and announced finally that she would compensate herself by annexing territory. Russell and Palmerston at last awoke to the fact that there was no question, as they had innocently believed, of a Schleswig-Holstein under Danish suzerainty; not even of a Schleswig-Holstein with an

3. Augustenburg duke entering the German Confederation. The prospect which they had to face was that of a Slesvig and a Holstein as the provinces of Prussia and Austria. ^{220.}

Between the completeness of the Prussian success, and the revelation of the Prussian duplicity, Russell and Palmerston were almost stunned. Bismarck had already won Slesvig; what then should ail him at Jutland? What was to keep him from swallowing all Denmark at a gulp? At this rate, the Prussian flag would float over Copenhagen in a few weeks. Bismarck had chosen his time well; the winter ice still

4. prevented the Danes from using their fleet, which he could not have hoped to meet, and blockading the German coast as they had done in 1848. ^{221.}

~~(Russell and Palmerston, in spite of the refusal which they had just given, felt that they were under an obligation to help Denmark.)~~ The danger was now seen to be greater than they had ^{been} supposed, and ^{Russell and Palmerston} they could not help feeling that some sort of action was necessary. For a moment it was touch and go whether Great Britain would not join in the struggle after all. How uncertain was the issue may be judged by the fact
 5. that on January 30th Russell^v actually informed the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne that the naval squadron lying off Lisbon ~~had been recalled~~, and that a British army corps was to occupy Copenhagen. ~~(Now, however, they paid the penalty for a long course of indecision and concession. While Prussia was still thought to be the Prussia of 1848, it would have been much more easy to persuade the country to go to war.)~~ Now^v that 222.
 the needle-gun had been seen in action, ^{however} many, even of the friends of Denmark, hesitated, where before they had been
 6. confident. The old difficulties, too, remained. Half^v the Cabinet, and the Queen, who still imagined that a settlement in favour of the Augustenburger was possible, took the side of Germany; and now, less than ever, did Russell and Palmerston dare to enter upon hostilities without allies. The "Times" throughout the crisis used its influence strongly ~~against war~~.
 At first Delane had taken the matter very lightly, writing, in November, "Schleswig-Holstein is to be settled in spite of 223.
 the effervescence of Germans and Danes, but it will blaze on a while, I daresay," and he had, for a time, favoured sending
 7. the fleet to Kiel, believing that nothing more than threats
 would be necessary. But when he saw that there was a serious

risk of war, he used all his influence to prevent it, and Palmerston wrote to complain of the "German tone" of the paper.

The real tug of war with Granville and his supporters now began. While the Prussian army was overrunning Slesvig and Jutland, the British leaders had to face three different tasks.²²⁴ First, they tried to persuade Prussia and Austria to consent to an armistice, and to submit the whole question to a conference; second, they began to search for allies ready to act with them in case of war; and third, they endeavoured to induce the Cabinet opposition to permit at least a naval demonstration in favour of Denmark.

Bismarck did not intend to be forced into an armistice before he was ready; and on one pretext or another, without actually refusing, he postponed it until Dybbøl had fallen and his position was secure.

As to allies, the most obvious was Sweden. She had already offered to land 30,000 men in Denmark whenever Britain gave the word, and she was busy preparing her navy, under the direction of France, for action in the Baltic. Italy also was eager to seize the chance to attack Austria in Venetia. Neither Italy nor Sweden, however, was strong enough to act alone, and the Cabinet had already decided, "after much deliberation, that...they should offer to assist Denmark by force only in case France should join in an alliance for that purpose." The two leaders, however, were not without hope

50) France offered to supply her with warships if she were not ready in time, *Les Origines*, No. 518. She had been acting under French instructions all winter, and had told Denmark that "France would come to her aid in the spring." Paget to F.O., 12 Dec. 1863, 21 Dec. 1863, F.O. Denmark, 305. Also Jerningham to F.O., 1 March 1864, F.O. Sweden, 338.
51) Russell, *Life*, p. 402.

^{not}
 1 without hope that Russia might be persuaded to join them in ^{226.}
 some military demonstration, and that in this case the cabinet
 might consent to move without France. While vainly exercis-
 10 ing all their blandishments upon the stony front of M. Drouyn
 de Lhuys, they carried on similar operations in the Nevski
 Prospekt. Gortschakov, the old dandy, airy, cajoling, court-
 ously impertinent, was as impervious to their efforts as the
 French minister. All keen observers now guessed that Russia
 must have some sort of understanding with Prussia, but the
 British government still continued to be pathetically confid-
 ent in Russian goodwill. Sweden now laid before the British
 ministers, and later published^N in the English newspapers, ^{227.}
 documents which purported to be recent Russian despatches,
 which, though perhaps forgeries in form, contained an essent-
 11 ial truth. They were said to be^V copies of letters from Gort-
 schakov to Bismarck, in which Gortschakov promised to hold
 Sweden in check with an army corps in Finland. The British
 ambassador, Lord Napier, while contesting the authenticity of
 the letters, admitted that Gortschakov's answer to the state-
 ment concerning Finland was evasive and unconvincing. ^(52.) But
 this did not make much impression on the home government, and
 Napier continued to ply Gortschakov with proposals for joint
 action. The most serious of these was that both governments ^{228.}
 should send a naval squadron to the Baltic. Gortschakov re-
 fused without concealing that he thought nothing would bring
 12 Great Britain to the point^V of fighting. As months passed, and
 the British fleet remained in home waters, --- "Resistance is

(52) ^{March} P.O. Russia. 658. 30. 7. 64. ^{July} 669. 24. 1864, etc. Lord Stratford de Redcliffe
 believed the despatches were genuine they stood.

53)

banished from your vocabulary," he said, dismissing the arguments of Lord Napier with a flirt of his hand.

Russell and Palmerston had hoped to serve two ends by the proposed naval demonstration. If it led to nothing, it would at least gloss over the fact that Britain had deserted Denmark in her extremity; but it would probably lead to an exchange of shots with German forces, and they hoped that by this means Granville and Co. would be dragged into war before they were aware of it. Granville was far too wary to fall into the trap, and steadily opposed the advances to Russia. In February Russell again announced to France that a squadron was to be sent to Copenhagen immediately. Pacific assurances from Prussia, however, and probably Cabinet opposition also, changed his view, and the orders were recalled. In April, Palmerston threatened to the Austrian ambassador that he would send a naval expedition to the Baltic, if Germany did not at once consent to an armistice; and on another occasion he informed Austria that Britain would not permit the Austrian fleet to unite with that of Germany; but in both cases a cool and pertinent remonstrance from Granville brought him to heel. The venerable Cupid found that the methods with which he had long baffled Prince Albert in bygone days were quite vain with Mr Puss. That gentleman, with admirable persistence, compelled the Prime Minister to eat his words and swallow one humiliation after another. Palmerston dared not dismiss half his Cabinet to plunge into war without an ally. So, though the melting of the ice had now released Denmark's fleet to sail over her own "dark rolling wave," her supremacy was only temporary; the British

53) Napier to F.O., 29 July 1864, F.O. Russia, 660.

54) La Tour d'Auvergne, 21 Feb. 1864, Les Origines No. 232. See also Nos. 234, 239.

lay idle, and soon Austrian ships of war were riding proudly by the little Prussian gunboats in the Baltic.

In April, Sir Augustus Paget came home on leave, and strongly pressed upon his government the necessity for a militant policy; but again Granville and his supporters refused their consent. "Mon collègue ^(Paget) me dit," wrote Dotézac, French minister at Copenhagen, "à titre très confidentiel, que, pendant son séjour à Londres, il avait ^{vivement} conseillé l'envoi d'une escadre dans le Baltique et d'aller jusqu'à une déclaration de guerre, si la Prusse et l'Autriche voulaient attenter à l'intégrité de la Monarchie. Lord Palmerston et le Comte Russell étaient de cet avis, mais M. Gladstone et les autres membres du Cabinet ont repoussé invinciblement toute résolution de cette nature." 282.

In the meantime, Bismarck, having gained all that was necessary for the moment, at last consented to an armistice, upon the most favourable terms for his country: Denmark had to give up the most part of her naval gains, while Prussia kept all that she had won by land. British influence was again exerted to induce the Danes to agree to these terms, and the Peace Conference so long desired at last met in London. 235.

There was now no question of upholding the Treaty of London; and indeed France had informed the government that she would be no party to pressing it upon the German powers. The only person who still hoped for even a purely personal union of the Duchies with Denmark was Christian IX, who as a German prince had no feeling for the interests of Denmark, and would have sacrificed 234

(55.)

Les Origines, No. 576. 25.5.64.

then without scruple to serve his dynastic interests and preserve a purely nominal sovereignty over the Duchies.

18. The programme of France, which was supported by Sweden, and to a large extent by the Danish government, as distinct from the king, was a modification of the Eider-Dane idea. ~~Holstein was to go to Germany (not to Prussia)~~: Slesvig was to be partitioned, the north and the mixed districts being incorporated in Denmark, the south in Holstein: Holstein and Lauenburg were to be created into a new state, under a sovereign^y agreeable to the inhabitants, and which was to be neither that of Prussia nor that of the Duke^v of Oldenburg (the candidate who had inherited the claims of Russia). France pressed King Christian to agree to this plan, and was not without hope of obtaining the concurrence of Austria. In public, she strongly advocated the holding of a plebiscite: in private, ~~she~~ was a little anxious about this expedient, for she wished the new Denmark to have a strong military frontier, and she was a little afraid lest Flensburg, and some of the mixed districts, might muster a German majority.

The British government had probably no more than a vague wish to save as much as possible for Denmark. As to the frontier, they agreed with the French ministers. In one respect, however, the two governments were in complete disagreement. France was dabbling, we can hardly tell how deeply, in PanScandinavian schemes with Sweden. Britain was greatly alarmed at the idea of a Scandinavian union, fearing that it would create a new naval power in the north.

Queen Victoria, and those who were influenced by her views, wished to see both the Duchies, under the Duke of Augustenburg,

also

enter the German Confederation. This was, the wish of the Confederation itself; ~~and its representative, Count Beust, afterwards said that if he had claimed Jutland for Germany also, Germany would have upheld him~~

21. Prussia, it is unnecessary to state, favoured none of these proposals. Russia quietly supported Prussia, while outwardly giving her adhesion to the various British and French proposals. Gortschakoff had before this time told Bismarck that he might have to send ships to join in a British naval demonstration in the Baltic, whereon Bismarck had responded, "We care nothing for ships that will not fire upon us." This incident is typical of the relations of the two powers at the **Conference**.

The Conference sat from April 12th until June 22nd, and accomplished nothing, save to show the helplessness of the neutral powers before the determination of Prussia. No detailed account of its sittings need ^v be given. The negotiations broke down upon the question of the frontier line. Denmark was now ready to abandon South Slesvig, and consented that the frontier should be drawn at the line of the river Schlei, but she refused to give up any district predominantly Danish. When Clarendon, who with Russell was British Plenipotentiary, pointed out that this might result in the loss of the whole duchy, Quaade merely replied that there were some conditions to which Denmark might give her consent when the situation had become desperate, but which until then would be dishonourable. The Prussian Plenipotentiaries, on ^v their side, refused to consider any line further south than that of Apenrade; and on this point the Conference broke up. Clarendon at the last proposed arbitration, and, possibly with the idea of

mollifying France, would have suggested the Emperor Napoleon as arbitrator. Bismarck said he was willing to submit to arbitration, but would not pledge himself to accept the decision of the arbitrator, and as no one else saw any utility in the scheme under these circumstances, it was abandoned. The ruthless determination of the Prussian delegates made an extraordinary impression on all those present. Clarendon broke out in passionate disgust: "Je ne veux pas ^(sic) jamais rien avoir à faire avec cet homme sans foi ni loi qui s'appelle M. de Bismarck, ni celui qui est son nègre M. de Reehberg!" 240.

Denmark renewed the war, still clinging to the hope that Britain could not stand by to watch her destruction after all that had passed;; and indeed this delusion had been shared by France and Sweden. But it was soon abandoned, as the dreary struggle was fought out to its inevitable end, and the yet drearier peace negotiations followed it, while Russell and Palmerston continued to scold and to do nothing. Both government and Queen had so willfully blinded themselves to the schemes of Prussia, that they could still receive with surprise the news that the Duchies had been ceded, not to the Confédération, but to Prussia and Austria. As for the Prince of Augustenburg, after "strutting and vapouring" a little longer, he disappeared to that Limbo-like realm where disinherited princes wander. Bismarck, in deference to King William's prejudices, interviewed him in order to see if he would consent to hold the Duchies as steward for Prussia; thinking himself strong in the support of Austria and the Confédération, he refused, and was contemptuously dismissed. Bismarck wrote to Britain and to France, demanding their congratulations for his 241. 242.

"moderation," and Russell soothed his conscience with reproaches.

"L'Attitude qu'a prise aujourd'hui l'Angleterre à votre égard," said M. Drouyn de Lhuys to the Danish envoy, "est tristement curieuse; elle vous accuse d'obstination et d'in-gratitude." (56.)

The Manchester men were jubilant.

"It is evident that our years of preaching on foreign policy and non-intervention have not been without effect," Bright noted with satisfaction in his journal. (57.)

"We have achieved a revolution in our foreign policy," said Cobden, "Our Foreign Office will never again attempt to involve us in any European entanglements for the Balance of Power, or for any dynastic purpose. Henceforth we shall observe an absolute abstention from continental politics. Non-intervention is the policy of all future governments in this country." (58.) 243.

(Others claimed that the victory of the cause of peace was due to Mr Delane.)

(56.) (41) Bille (Danish envoy in London) 14.7.64. July

(57.) (41) ~~Travelogue~~ Bright, p. 333. No date given.

(58.) (41) To Michel Chevalier, 5.11.64. Nov. ~~Horley's~~ Cobden. p. 591.

V.

Despite the excuses with which they afterwards salved their consciences, Russell and Palmerston were not really insensible of their obligations to Denmark. In December 1863, Russell had written to his colleague that an invasion of Slesvig by German troops "would, in my clear opinion, entitle Denmark to our active military and naval support."⁵⁹⁾ 244.

It has already been shown what obstacles prevented them ~~from following this policy. On the one hand, the opposition led by Granville and supported by the Queen; on the other, the lack of a strong ally on the continent. It would have been impossible in any case to persuade Russia to act with them; France could have been induced to move, but only at a price.~~

The break-up of the Franco-British alliance was the necessary condition of the success of Bismarck's policy, and when this happened, it was at the very moment to suit him. The coldness²⁴⁵ caused by the Polish affair and the refusal of the conference had for the remainder of the year 1863 prevented all joint action by the Western Powers. The first impulse of France was evidently to withdraw from all friendly intercourse with Britain; this passed, but she was still determined not to join in a war against Germany unless with a distinct guarantee, first,

⁵⁹⁾ Russell, Life, p. 401. (Italics Russell's.)

consented to cede a foot of German ground, but he dangled the bait temptingly before Napoleon. The Emperor was dazzled, and coquetted with Prussia, but all the same he would have preferred the alternative course, for, in spite of its dangers and uncertainties, he was ~~very much~~ attached to the British alliance. 249.

The French solution for the Danish problem was decided, though the question was complicated by the impossibility of opposing the German nationalist movement, because to do so was contrary to the Emperor's declared views on Nationalism. It was natural to turn to the only reasonable solution, the Eider-Dane Policy, ~~(for help. Either by war, or, preferably, by negotiation)~~ France proposed to give Holstein and Lauenburg to Germany, and to establish a united Scandinavia, or at least a strong Denmark including all or part of Slesvig, as a counterpoise in the Baltic to the growing power of Germany; Napoleon would want a lawyer's fee for arranging this settlement---if possible, something on the Rhine, but if necessary he would be content with a "moral" gain: that is to say, the cession of Venetia to Italy. (60.)

If adopted by Britain and France in union, this plan had a ~~some~~ considerable chance of success. The military situation was favourable: France would have flung her forces against the Rhine;

Italy would have attacked in Venetia; Sweden was waiting the word to land an army in Denmark; Britain could have sent a small force to Denmark, and her fleet could have at once blockaded the North German coast. Austria would have had to withdraw her attention from Slesvig in order to face Italy, who was so anxious for war that her ambassador in Stockholm had instructions to watch for the slightest sign of a movement on the part of Sweden, ⁽⁶¹⁾ and her pugnacious little king had even declared his readiness to take on France and Austria simultaneously, if the former showed any disposition to change sides.

On the other hand, it is improbable that Bismarck ~~himself~~ could have lured Russia into another war with France and Britain, and it is probable that if Bismarck had seen the two latter powers really united, and had been offered Holstein as a gift, he would have preferred this peaceful solution to risking a general European war. He would never have consented to cessions on the Rhine; but if war had not actually broken out, France would probably have been prepared to accept the "moral gain"---the cession of Venetia ~~to Italy~~---as a fair equivalent. And Bismarck could be generous with his neighbour's property. 252.

The prospects of success for the French plan being so fair, why did the British government so unhesitatingly refuse it? 253.

They/

(61) F.O. Denmark. 333. Tennyson to F.O. 15. February 1864. ✓

were well aware of the wishes of the French government, for, though no official offers were made at first, strong hints were given, or suggestions offered through unofficial channels. Napoleon, as early as December 1863, gracefully insinuated his designs on the Rhine to Lord Dufferin.

"He was constantly talking of the great results which the bona fide English and French alliance might have produced, and as constantly of the extreme improbability of that alliance being able to survive this last shock to its cordiality." (the British refusal of a ^{Congress} ~~Conference~~, see above, p. 166) "He had hoped that, once the Congress started, England and France might have settled all irksome questions their own way..... and after all, he did not see how the acquisition of the Rhenish provinces by France could injure us, and that undoubtedly if there had been a Congress, some slight modification of the northern frontier of France, to the extent perhaps of the extradition of a fortress here and there, might have been subjected to its consideration. But all this, in such neat and delicate language that no English can render its subtlety....." (62) 254.

To Clarendon, Napoleon later said that he would not fight for Denmark, as that question was not generally understood in France, and that if he did fight, he would be accused of doing so for other motives. The significance of this is obvious, though we cannot tell how far Clarendon comprehended it. 255.

At the funeral of Frederick VII (of Denmark) Fleury, the French special envoy, who was known to have secret instructions from his Imperial master, virtually told Lord Wodehouse that France

had adopted the Eider-Dane policy. Fleury had been ostensibly sent to advise Denmark to withdraw the constitution and make concessions to Germany, but both Paget and Wodehouse suspected that privately he had given contrary counsels. 256.

"The idea of these gentlemen," (the Eider-Danes) "the General" (Fleury) "remarked, 'is the one to which we must ultimately have recourse.' 'What is to become of Holstein?' I replied. 'Holstein will fall to Germany.' 'And Kiel?' 'Kiel might be neutralised.'The language of the General reported above indicates perhaps the mode in which the Emperor would like to see the difference between Germany and Denmark finally settled." (63) ~~63~~

M. Drouyn de Lhuys, though too dignified to make the offer openly without encouragement, had made the position of France clear in his interviews with Cowley. His continual protests that France would never ~~accept~~ any increase of territory were obvious hints. 257.

"The most curious part of this conversation," Cowley wrote later, "was an assertion of M. Drouyn de Lhuys that he had given me to understand that the cooperation of France might have been obtained by an intimation from Her Majesty's Government that some material ~~and~~ moral advantage would necessarily accrue to her in the event of her taking up arms. Now

(11) (F.O. Denmark, 306. Wodehouse Mission. 17. Dec. 1863 To F.O. June 1864.

Now M. Drouyn de Lhuys has on the contrary in his conversations
 51. with me ^v invariably asserted that it was a calumny to suppose
 that the Emperor entertained those plans of obtaining the
 Frontier of the Rhine which had been attributed to him". (64)

48
 One can understand how M. Drouyn de Lhuys must have longed to
 throw the ink-pot at his head, (for the attitude of France had
 been clearly understood by all the British ministers, and
 Cowley himself had written four months earlier that France
 was eager for war - "They can now, hardly even for the sake of
 decency, conceal their joy," because war has begun.) "It is

52. curious to observe at the same time the vexation caused by
 the seeming determination of H.M. Government not to give material
 assistance to the Danes under present circumstances. . .

The conduct of Great Britain is condemned in terms not very
 agreeable to English listeners. It would almost seem as if ^v 259
 some French plan had been defeated by the passive attitude
 of H.M. Government". (65) And he goes on to speculate, that France
 would have intervened in such a case, and proposed a partition
 between Germany and Scandinavia as the solution, with, of
 course, some reward for herself.

53. There seems to have been a point when Russell was
 almost ready to consent to the French terms. In February
 1864 he proposed to Palmerston a French alliance, on these
 terms: /An offer of joint mediation; if the German powers

(64) F. O. France. 1530. ~~1530~~. Cowley to F.O. 11 June 1864

(65) F. O. France. 1525. ~~1525~~. Do " " 5 February 1864.

287 -
refused this, Britain

to send a squadron to Copenhagen, and France an army corps to 260.
the Rhine; further measures then to be arranged. This practically meant that France would be allowed to take at least some of the districts coveted by Napoleon; Palmerston perceived this, and so refused Russell's plan, on the grounds that such gains would be dangerous to Great Britain.

54. For some time efforts continued to be made^v to induce France to join in protest or demonstration; but it was clearly understood that the Acquisitions on the Rhine would not be permitted; and so France doggedly refused all cooperation. She pointed out that the brunt of the war would fall on her, as she fought on land, 261.
while British operations would probably be confined to the sea; she could not risk such a struggle without compensation. (66) (II)

At the same time, she tried to be conciliatory: she hinted that she would be content with the cession of Venetia and the neutralisation of some Rhenish districts; possibly even with the first alone. There is no doubt that France believed that the obligation of Great Britain to protect Denmark would force her to enter the war, sooner or later, upon the French terms, and she continued to give secret encouragement to Denmark and Sweden.

55. In February, Cowley advised his government to avoid even a naval 262.
demonstration, as that would give France all she wanted, and because while peace was preserved there always remained a chance that France would change her mind, and consent to cooperate upon British terms. (12) (67)

(66)
(11) F.O. France, 1524. 26.2.64. Cowley to F.O., 26 June 1864. F.O. France, 1524.
(67)
(12) F.O. France, 1526. 23.2.64. Cowley to F.O., 23 February 1864. F.O. France, 1526.

It was, however, while the Conference was sitting that the most definite proposals were made by France. On the 5th of June Count Manderström was horrified by a rumour that a confidential suggestion was about to be made by Russia that the whole of Denmark should enter the German Confederation. Such a step meant the destruction of Danish nationality, but it was feared that the King was so anxious to retain his title in the Duchies that he would wish to accept this proposal. Frantic telegrams flew from Stockholm to London and Paris, and Drouyn de Lhuys, as much alarmed as Manderström, immediately wired to the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne that France was determined to oppose the plan.

"Je vous prie de porter cette information à la connaissance de Son Excellence M. le Comte Russell, et de lui dire que la France serait disposée à unir ses forces de terre et de mer à celles de la Grande-Bretagne pour empêcher l'accomplissement d'un pareil projet, si telle était la pensée du Cabinet de Londres." ~~III~~ (68) 264.

The rumour was ~~at once~~ contradicted by Gortschakoff, but in the meantime Russell had sent a reply of the utmost importance.

"England," he said, equally disapproved of the reported scheme: 58. "mais, d'après l'opinion de Lord Russell, elle ne saurait prendre l'engagement de s'opposer avec nous, par la force, à l'accomplissement du projet russe, que si, nous étant mis préalablement d'accord avec elle sur la frontière à tracer dans le Slesvig, et cette frontière une fois acceptée par le Danemark, nous consentions à réunir nos efforts aux siens pour l'imposer au besoin à l'Allemagne." ~~III~~ (69) 265.

Drouyn de Lhuys replied with a definite offer of French assistance for Denmark---at a price. It is much more difficult, he says, for France to join in such a war than for ^{Britain} "England!" She cannot limit her action to a naval demonstration. Is she to plunge into a war with Germany in order to save 25,000 more men for Denmark? "Devant une eventualité de cette nature, l'Angleterre serait-elle disposer à nous prêter un appui illimité? Le Gouvernement de sa Majesté, en demandant au grands Corps de ~~l'~~ l'Etat leur concours, aurait à leur expliquer pour quels avantages le sang de la France va couler. Le Cabinet anglais nous mettrait-il à même de répondre à cette question, la première assurément que nous serait faite? Pour nous, Prince, notre pensée ne s'est jamais arrêtée sur ce point. Si nous étions guidées par des vues ambitieuses, nous eussions peut-être cherché à mettre à profit l'occasion présente, en nous traçant une plan de conduite propre à les satisfaire. Mais nous sommes demeurés étrangers à cet ordre de considérations, et nous nous demandons si le Gouvernement de sa Majesté Britannique aurait à nous proposer quelque combinaison politique que nous offrirait un dédommagement à nos sacrifices." Lord Russell, he continues, thinks that to threaten Germany will be enough. But will not such a threat arouse national feeling against the neutral powers, and produce a strong movement to resist them? After the Polish incident, words, if not followed by actions, will be fatal to the dignity of the powers. (70)

(49) This offer was not accepted. A polite reply, ignoring the conditions made and accepting the French note as a refusal definite

(and absolute) was the only result. Even now, however, France ~~did~~
not abandon the idea. Her rulers^N were waiting only till the ²⁶⁸
~~Congress~~
~~Conference~~ should break up---an event fully expected---when, they
believed, Britain would be forced to take up arms for Denmark.

France, too, in this case, would be free to act in a way which was
at present ~~impossible~~. Accordingly, we find Drouyn de Lhuys

62. writing to^V de la Tour d'Auvergne, as soon as the failure of the
~~Congress~~
~~Conference~~ was known, that the situation is now changed. France
could not fight against nationalism, but now that the ~~Congress~~
~~Conference~~ has proved unsuccessful, she is no longer opposing a nationalist
movement if she opposes Prussia and^L Austria---the war is no ²⁶⁹
longer a nationalist war, but is threatening the independence
of Denmark and is being waged for territorial aggrandisement.

"Nous ne saurions assurément envisager avec indifférence de sem-
blables éventualités..... Le devoir du Gouvernement de l'Em-
pereur envers la France serait de ne pas déposer les armes," he

63. goes on^V to say, considering the possibility of war, "sans réclamer
pour prix de ses sacrifices, des compensations qui pourraient
amener des changements importants dans les délimitations terri-
toriales et par conséquent aussi des modifications dans les con-
ditions actuelles de l'équilibre générale" France does not wish
to enter into such an enterprise unless^N it be absolutely nec- ²⁷⁰
essary, and Drouyn de Lhuys does not think circumstances, grave
as they are, will oblige her to leave the neutrality she desires
to keep. If Britain declares war on Germany, she will have the
moral support of France, and France will place no obstacles in her
64. way, and will take written engagements to this effect if so
desired. (71)

~~27th June had been made and refused.~~)

On the 15th of July Bille reported a conversation with "one of his colleagues" of the Diplomatic Corps. "Il n'y a encore, selon mon interlocuteur aucun rapprochement réel entre les Cabinets de Paris et d'ici, et l'on continue à se défier un peu l'un de l'autre. Il m'assure que le cabinet Anglais n'est pas encore tout-à-fait rassuré que la France n'a pas une entente secrète avec la Prusse touchant nos affaires, tandis- que le Cabinet de Paris craint toujours qu'en cas d'une grande crise européenne l'Angleterre ne finisse par se ranger du côté des ennemis de la France. Cette défiance mutuelle paralyse et continuera malheureusement à paralyser pour longtemps encore toute action commune des deux Cabinets. Il faut enfin ajouter qu'à la fin d'une session parlementaire orageuse les hommes d'état Anglais sont fatigués et peu disposés à lier de nouvelles relations politiques."

"We cannot with justice complain," wrote Clarendon, the British minister whose attitude towards France was perhaps the most generous. "He (Napoleon) has the same right as ourselves to pursue an independent course, and to think only of the interests of France; and he is even now not throwing us over as

~~The quotations from Bille's letters (are made from the copies of the letters in the Danish papers, sent by Paget to the Foreign Office, F.O. Denmark, 31st) were published without permission in the Danish press in August.~~

as we did him, when in the midst of a negotiation we publicly declared that nothing should ever make us go to war for Poland. He was frank enough on the subject with me and said that in the present peaceful mood of the French people and the Corps Legislatif he could not go to war for a question that did not touch the dignity or the interests of France unless there was a prospect of compensation held out; and as Europe in general---and England in particular---would be adverse to any such compensation, he must be specially cautious not to be accused of provoking a war that would lead to it. He could not therefore join us in using even the language of menace, for he must be prepared to act up to his threats, and to have an army of 200,000 men in the field in order to be ready for anything that United Germany might do.

"The only fear of the Prussians is a good understanding between England and France, and we must try to keep up a semblance of it even though it should not really exist. The Emperor would not dislike that France and England should together have the credit of settling the vexed Danish question; but he would like much more to see us engaged single-handed in hostilities with Germany, as that would make him master of the situation, and heaven only knows how he would then use his power or into which scale he would throw his sword."

(13)

We have therefore unmistakeable proof that France made a definite offer to Britain, and that this offer was not accepted, because the price to be paid for it was considered to be too $\frac{1}{2}$ high.

Had the government declared war on the first invasion of Denmark by the German powers, they would have been able to count on a certain amount of support from the parliamentary Opposition and from a considerable section of opinion in the country. The feeling in favour peace among the mercantile classes, later ^{very} 276 was not organised or definitely expressed until the summer of 1864. The Conservatives at first declared themselves so much in sympathy with Denmark and against Germany, that even when the progress of the war had damped their enthusiasm they could not ~~have whole heartedly opposed a militant policy~~ whole-heartedly have condemned a militant policy. The government would therefore have been in a strong position as regards Cabinet rebellion, and most of the malcontent ministers would probably have hesitated to carry their opposition as far as resignation.

In 1864, therefore, Britain was for the first time confronted with the question---France or Germany? The dread of 277 France was too strong, and the question was decided in favour of Germany. 14.

Chapter III The Austro-Prussian War, 1866-6.

Section I.

"England is as powerless on the Continent as she is presuming," wrote the Prussian Chief of Staff, in the **brief** lull that followed the Danish War.¹⁾

In the Danish question the men who guided the policy of Great Britain had been dealing, to a large extent, with an unknown quantity; but this excuse was now gone. The events of 1863-4 had made clear, not only the aims of Bismarck, but the methods by which he intended to reach his ends, and the richness of the resources on which he could draw for support. In 1859 Bismarck had been in London, and, in his charming soft voice, had entertained a noble assembly with an account of how he meant to unify Germany and establish her as the chief power in Europe. His hearers were much amused by the recital---all except one, whose mind, as much that of a poet as of a statesman, detected the ring of truth in those silky tones. "Take care of that man," said Disraeli, "He means what he says."

Now that scheme, outlined in an English drawingroom, had begun to be carried into action; but no one seemed to remember that conversation, or draw from it conclusions as to the future. No one asked, "What powers, now Denmark has been swept away, stand in Bismarck's way?" nor answered, "Austria, because she prevents Prussia from getting control of Germany; France, because she will oppose Germany's obtaining a dominant position in Europe."

It was not only that they took for granted that Austria and France were far too strong to be attacked; but they simply refused to contemplate a future so unpleasant. ~~Clarendon~~ i-
¹⁾ Moltke to his brother Adolf, 24 June 1865. Moltke, II, p. 125.

3. refused to contemplate a future so unpleasant. Clarendon's attitude was the general one: they did not want to have anything more to do with M. de Bismarck. Much as they disliked him, they did not fear him, for they regarded him as little more than a successful gambler. They did not even trouble to learn how to spell his name, but continued with lordly indifference to address their despatches to "Bismark." They turned their attention to home affairs, and waited for Prussia to settle down again.

4. It is difficult to decide whether this refusal to face facts was due to moral cowardice or mental incapacity. Probably both causes played a part. Deceive themselves as they might, both political parties were uneasily conscious that they had now showed to the best advantage; and neither dared to contemplate what they should do if faced with another such problem in the near future. The Liberals never admitted that they had made a mistake. The Conservatives, however, had fared the best. They were in the safe position of critics ~~at the time~~ who

2) Russell's "Recollections and Suggestions" contains absolutely no reference to Denmark, and in his survey of his foreign policy the Danish Question and the events of 1863-4 are omitted.

can be wise after the event. But even they had some unpleasant memories. They had, originally, been in favour of strong action.

(2)

Derby, especially, had greatly sympathised with the Danes.

With the advent of the needle-gun, however, their views underwent a change. A war with Prussia no longer appeared in the light of

a mere picnic. ~~(They suddenly found themselves obliged to change their tactics.)~~ They could not risk being called into office

5.

pledged to a war, to which the Queen was opposed, when the

enemy was armed with rifles that could outrange and outfire

the British brand. Fortunately they had never definitely pro-

nounced in favour of a declaration of war; they had been

cautious, and Disraeli, who was nursing ~~(wild and)~~ ambitious plans,

had never wanted to fight. But from this time on they were

careful to base all their attacks on the Government on the ~~fact~~ *ground*

that the Liberals had got the country into a position where she

must fight an unnecessary war or be dishonoured; not on the

6.

~~fact~~ *ground* that the government ought to fight, and was afraid to do so.

They covered their retreat skilfully, and convinced themselves

and others that they believed in the rights of Germany, and

so were unwilling to undertake hostilities against that

country; but ~~(all the same it was uncomfortable to think that~~

~~they would not have dared to fight the state of which, a few~~

~~months before, they had been frankly contemptuous. Both parties,~~

~~they were as unwilling as the Liberals to contemplate~~

~~therefore, were equally averse from contemplating another incident~~

of this kind in future, and, rather than face the troublesome

task of preventing its recurrence, they tried to forget the whole

(3) See Malmesbury's "Memoirs of an Ex-Minister" diary for 1883-4.

(4) See Vitzthum von Eckstadt, "London and St Petersburg".

affair, and, convinced that the sole mistake had been the strong language used by Lord Russell, they set themselves to cultivate a diplomatic style soft, conciliatory, and carefully non-committal. 7.

~~(Apart from this wilful blindness, however, there was a real ignorance. Neither party had learnt the lesson they might have from the events of 1864: they had been shocked out of their placidity, but they were still too much bewildered to understand what was going on.)~~

For one thing, ⁽¹⁴⁾ no one regarded Bismarck as a permanent factor in politics. They knew his unpopularity in ^{Prussia} ~~Germany~~, and the strong forces arrayed against him there. They looked forward to the victory of the Liberal party, and the establishment of constitutional government, with its party system, and consequent change of ministries, as inevitable. Bismarck ~~was~~ still ^{seemed to them} ~~to them~~ an adventurer who had seized his chance to fish in troubled waters. He was a reactionary, a "throwback" to the old marauding Freitherren, his ancestors, who had introduced the methods of feudal disorder into modern times, and snatched, by sheer luck, a temporary success. It was the daring of his policy, not its depth, foresight, and cunning, that had impressed their minds. They attributed the success which was due to his genius, to happy circumstances. Then, and for some time afterwards, Bismarck seemed to the majority of British statesmen ~~as~~ a reckless, dashing firebrand of a man, not a cautious plotter. Consider, for example, the estimate of his character and policy given by Dilke more ⁽⁵⁾ than twenty years later.

(14) "The mere ephemeral symptoms of Bismarckism," Morier, ~~Vol.~~ p. 67.

(5) "The Present Position of European Politics," ~~1887~~ p. 13.

51
 "To ascribe to him the astuteness of a Machiavelli, or even of a Talleyrand, is to give him credit for, or perhaps the discredit of, a quality he does not possess. His strength is the strength of a man who knows what he wants, and who, having in years past played very boldly for high stakes, has happened to win, and having won is strong enough to hold his own..... Since that victory" (1866) "he has been supreme in Europe, and in a position to have little occasion for the use of diplomatic artifice.... Perhaps.... through the growth of the military power of Russia and of France, and through the recent revelations of Austrian military weakness, Prince Bismarck will be called upon to make more serious diplomatic efforts than he has ever yet had occasion to put forth..... Prince Bismarck, as is, indeed, usual with him in great affairs, never held in secret any different language from that of which he made use in public."

~~If this view could be put forth in 1887 by a statesman of some experience and capacity, it will not be surprising if even more romantic ideas were current in 1864. It is interesting to note the impression which Bismarck created on the mind of the British ambassador at Berlin, who had opportunities of observing him much more closely than the home government. Lord Napier, a good-natured and gossiping gentleman, was evidently struck by the personality of the Prussian statesman, for he discussed it in many long rambling despatches which recall the innocent prattle of a child; though with all his silliness, he now and then hits upon a truth which appears to have escaped Sir Charles Dilke.~~

"As for Count de Bismarck, if he were to be judged solely by what he says he would inspire an impression of reckless ambition scarcely qualified by any calculation of danger or comparison of advantages. It would, however, be erroneous to estimate the Prussian minister by his talk. He allies with intemperate speculations and utterances a sound political judgment and a warm attachment to his country." (6)

"The chimerical temperament of the Minister may inspire him

(6) ~~F.O. Prussia 577, 21.10.65.~~

(6) Napier to F.O., 21. Oct. 1865. F.O. Prussia, 577

with many strange transitory notions and speeches which will be heard with amazement and which will probably leave not a trace behind." 12.

7)

In connection

Of the quarrel between Bismarck and the Liberals, and his illegal action in the Prussian Chambers, 8) Napier wrote: "I do not blame M. de Bismarck for not resigning now... for

I blame him for those previous errors of judgment, ~~these~~ those indulgences of an erratic and overbearing temperament, which have deprived him now of the means of doing right. The conduct of M. de Bismarck at an earlier period has made it difficult for him to control the King, and impossible for him, I fear, to control the opposition... He does not fear God like the King, and I cannot assert that his conscience is very delicate, or that he would stick at an act of usurpation if the interest of Prussia was at stake; but M. de Bismarck with all his faults of temper has an intelligent generous aspiring mind, he has no absolute aversion to Parliaments, I am certain that he would sympathise as heartily with the House of Commons as an English County Tory member would do, it is not Parliaments absolutely but the Prussian Parliament that he dislikes." 13.

"I am bound to add that I cannot vouch with confidence either for the complete sincerity or for the consistency of M. de Bismarck. It is possible that he was disguising his real intentions under a mask of moderation...but I think he expressed his real sentiments at the moment." 14.

7) Napier to F.O. 14. Oct. 1865. F.O. Prussia, 577.

8) Concerning supplies.

9) Napier to F.O., 9 May 1865. F.O. Prussia, 574.

10) The same, 21 April 1865. F.O. Prussia, 574.

1865, had a still more vague conception of the Minister's aims and character. He refers to ^{his} ~~that~~ frankness which almost amounts to a failing," and seems to have believed that Bismarck had no object beyond establishing a fat, solid, autocratic little Prussia on lines which the Great Elector might have conceived; for when the war with Austria was over, he speaks of "changes which Count Bismarck in his most elated moments never anticipated, and which have taken both him and the Prussian nation by surprise. Indeed so great and so unexpected," he goes on to say, "Have been the success of the Prussian arms that it is not unlikely to form an embarrassment and even a danger to the political system which Count Bismarck is aiming to establish." (10) 15.

Morier, too, a man of a very different stamp, actually spoke of Bismarck, in 1866, as "a straw floating upon the current of public opinion," and though he described him, about the same time, as "one of the most sinister of figures that has ever been painted on the canvas of history," he seems to have still regarded him as a political pirate, a sort of Richard III who would have his brief hour of triumphant crime, and fall before the irresistible advancing forces of enlightened Liberalism. 16.

There is something pathetic in that conviction of the most high-minded men in the British political world---men like Morier and Clarendon---that complete success could never attend anything so immoral as the policy of Bismarck: that right must triumph in the end, and that "blood and iron" having ruled awhile must pass away before the stronger forces of justice, liberty, and peace. The first success of Bismarck's policy had thrown everything into a strange confusion. Was this new Germany an 17.

enemy in the mask of friend, or a friend masked like an enemy? The easiest was to forget all unpleasant incidents, and remember only that they were at least to have a ~~strong~~ Prussia to hold France in check, and that the means by which this result was obtained was not their business. "Whatever be the result it is satisfactory to reflect that the interests of England are not deeply or directly involved,"---this is the parrot-cry of the diplomats, as the second phase of the struggle opens.

Those of finer moral perceptions, however, were filled with regret. To Morier and his friends it was as if the country they loved had soiled her panache. Morier eagerly repudiated, for Germany, Bismarck's policy. "The one thing for which, therefore, more than all other things, I conceive Bismarck ought to be execrated, is his having by the impress of his own detestable individuality on the political canvas now unrolling before Europe so utterly disfigured the true outline of the picture, that not only public opinion, but the judgment of wise and thoughtful men, is almost sure to go wrong."¹²⁾

The sensations of these men, as they saw their dreams of a strong and united Germany being made real by one whom they despised/

12) Morier, II, p. 71.

and whose methods they execrated, were painfully confused. The first impulse was to deny Bismarck's success---to say that he was really hindering, not helping, the cause. He was "incalculably injuring Prussia's position in Germany to the great detriment of Europe. When looked at by other eyes than those blinded by successful diplomatic gymnastics nothing can appear more hopelessly poor and unfruitful than the statesmanship of Prussia in Germany for the last six months, or more worthless than the cash in hand when compared with the gigantic profits which she might have made out of the chances which the last twelve months have placed into (sic) her power." So Morier wrote to Russell in March 1865. (13)

Later, (as we may see,) he endeavoured to persuade himself that Bismarck's success, now unmistakeable, was due to his gradually abandoning his old aims and methods, and ~~adopting~~ adopting those of the Liberals. At present, however, Morier still leaned to the view that Bismarck was courting disaster, and that his appearance was a transitory one, which might possibly hinder, possibly help, the good cause, but which could not permanently affect it. (With all his hatred of Bismarck, Morier had the courage of his convictions, and was able to force himself, in the end, to accept the Junker Statesman as a necessary evil, for the sake of the work he was doing.) He saw that you could not fight Bismarck without fighting Germany, and he admitted this, without seeing the ominous results that might be deduced from this. (14)

"The despairing feature of the matter for me is the violent conflict of my brain and my heart, my heart being all of it with

(13) F.O. Prussia. 574. Private letter, 30 March 1865. ✓

these people, and my brain altogether on the other side. I dare say it will seem inexplicable to you, that knowing Bismarck as I do, any portion of me, still less my brain, should be in the camp which he has stamped out of the reluctant, peace-loving Prussian earth to carry out his policy of Violence and wrong. This will appear all the more inexplicable to you when you reflect that I have been here ~~(14)~~ during the last twelve months and have had every opportunity of convincing myself of the perfect loyalty and honesty of Mensdorff's policy..... Well, notwithstanding all this I am profoundly convinced that the complete victory of Austria in this war....would be the greatest misfortune that could happen to Europe generally, and to Germany, Italy, and Austria in particular..... This work of consolidation" (of Germany) "cannot take place otherwise than through and with Prussia....hence, 93. however condemnable the springs which set in motion the actions of Prussian statesmen, any increase of power and any success of Prussia remains a clear gain to Germany." ~~(15)~~ (15.)

(Morier, then, and the school which he represents, finally gave up any idea of resistance to Bismarck's policy, for the sake of what that policy was doing for German unity.) Another, and a larger body of political opinion in Britain decided to ignore Bismarck's sins because they thought a strong Prussia (they scarcely believed as yet in a strong Germany) would serve the interests of Britain. ^{all} Both agreed in regarding Bismarck as an ephemeral phenomenon---"this season's daffodil"---who might be permitted his short reign without serious harm being done.

(14) At Vienna.

(15) Morier to Lady Salisbury, 24. June 66. Vol. II. p. 68.

~~This turning of a blind eye towards the faults of Prussia, how-
 ever, must depend upon the future behaviour of that country.~~ ^{of, however,} The
 British government were willing to let bygones be bygones--~~but~~ ^{24.}
 they really must be bygones. All should be forgiven, if the
 erring one would now return to the fold---but there must be no
 attempt to repeat these undesirable escapades. That would reopen
 the whole question, which was what the Liberal government dread-
 ed. They had weathered the parliamentary crisis brought about
 by their mismanagement of Slesvig-Holstein, better than might
 have been expected, owing to the headlong eloquence of Palmerston,
 and they were still in office: but they could not stand another
 shock of the same kind. ~~They had resolved to be more cautious
 in future, but they preferred to have no need for caution.~~ All
 their influence with Prussia, therefore, was directed to pressing
 upon that state the need for careful going. Prussia, they urged, ^{25.}
 should be content to consolidate what she had gained, and run no
 further risks. These counsels ~~were~~ more frequently offered,
 when it became clear that Prussia and Austria were likely to
 squabble over the spoils of war.

"The true policy of Prussia is now to secure what she has
 gained, to be satisfied with moderate advantages, to avoid great
 adventures, and to close an account which at this moment exhibits
 a satisfactory balance in her favour," ^(16.) ~~He~~ said Napier to Bismarck.

It was not that they had, even now, any real fear of Prussia
 herself. The swiftness and completeness of her triumph had been ^{26.}
 attributed to Danish weakness rather than to her own strength,
 and though their opinion of her military resources had gone up

~~Napier's advice to Bismarck.~~ ^(16.) Napier to F.O. ^{was done} 17. 5. 65. F.O. Prussia 574.

with a jump, they still regarded her as infinitely inferior, as a military power, to France, and even to Austria. The reports of the military attachés at Paris and at Berlin did not counteract this impression, and the military attaché at Vienna, as far as his knowledge of the state of the Austrian army was concerned, might as well have been in Pekin. When, in April 1865, Prussia declared her intention of making Kiel a naval base for a new Prussian fleet, Lord Napier reported in a tone of patronising contempt, on the country's military and naval resources.

27.

"If the proposal of the Cabinet of M. de Bismarck be discussed simply with a view to proximate and practical utility it might be condemned. The Prussian army is far from perfect, the soldiers are ill-fed and ill-paid, the land defences of Prussia are incomplete, the railways of Prussia are in need of development and state assistance, the civil functionaries of Prussia are insufficiently remunerated, the educational institutions of Prussia are starved, there are many crying necessities for which the credit of the state might be equitably involved and beneficially devoted.... (17) (The Prussian Government here contemplates the

28.

~~creation of a naval force which shall be fitted for a triple duty, to defend the coast of the Confederation, to meet and attack a hostile war fleet on the open sea, and to pursue and capture the trading vessels of her enemy in distant regions. There is a large indulgence of the fancy in this picture sketched by some enthusiastic and sedentary functionary in a Berlin Bureau.~~ (1)

Their attitude to Prussia, therefore, was still partially one of contempt. What they really dreaded was that Bismarck might continue his disturbing policy, and attempt to make further acquis-

largely

(1) F.O. Prussia 574
Napier to F.O. 20 April 65

(2) Ib. (17) Napier to F.O. 20 April 1865, F.O. Prussia, 574

itions---this time at the expense of Austria or the small German states---by the aid of an alliance with France. Napoleon III would then, they feared, use the impetuous and inexperienced Prussian minister as a tool, to be flung aside when all was over. Austria would be crushed, Prussia duped and defrauded, and France ^{triumphantly holding the Rhine frontier.} would be left ~~with the frontier of the Rhine in her hands.~~ It must be remembered that they estimated the capacity of Napoleon much more highly than that of Bismarck. He was still to them the mysterious and Machiavellian figure of the coup d'état and of ~~1859, while their ideas about Bismarck have already been described.~~

"I learn," wrote Napier in October 1865, "From a respectable source that M. de Bismarck has addressed a private letter to one of his colleagues in which he describes a conversation with the Emperor of the French. The Prussian minister relates that he broached to His Imperial Majesty the project of the annexation of Holstein, and that the Emperor listened to his argument (sic) ^{so} with benevolent reserve. We can imagine the eccentric volubility with which M. de Bismarck would develop his sanguine schemes, and the covert irony and silent amusement of the subtle sovereign." ^{(18) (11)}

Owing to ~~this~~ curious reversal of parts, exemplified by the scene thus described by the imaginative Lord Napier, the home Government ~~did not stop to think what might happen if Bismarck should use, and deceive, Napoleon, instead of being used and deceived by him.~~ ^{wished only} ^{Keep} Their object was to persuade Bismarck to be content and quiet, and so deprive Napoleon of any chance of making his own profit from European disorders. During the first

part of 1865, therefore, we find that British despatches assume a remarkably friendly tone towards Prussia. There were no more reproaches and rebukes. Bismarck was informed that "Her Majesty's Government has no other view in this affair than to see Germany united and powerful and that the eventual settlement of the Duchies should be such as would leave Austria and Germany satisfied, and Prussia invested with those local rights and privileges, which might be legitimately requisite for her own interests, and the common defence." ~~and the dislike and resentment which Russell really cherished towards Bismarck were carefully controlled.~~ Bismarck was quick to turn the change of sentiment to his own purposes. Sir Andrew Buchanan reported from St Petersburg, "I have reason to believe that Prussian diplomatic agents endeavour to represent Her Majesty's Government as indifferent to the future disposal of the Duchies of Slesvig and Holstein and that Count Bernstorff reports Your Lordship to consider the annexation of these Duchies objectionable merely because such a measure might encourage an aggressive policy on the part of France." ^{(19) (20)} ~~the government~~ Meanwhile ~~they~~ looked eagerly to the day when the Slesvig-Holstein Question should be, at long last, finally settled, and any pretext for French interference with German affairs removed: and it was, therefore, with growing uneasiness and displeasure that they saw that Question drag on, month after month, without any definite agreement being come to, and indeed, with an increasing asperity and irritation visible in the relations of the two Great German Powers. It could now be seen that Prussia wanted full control of both Duchies, and that she would not

permit any prince to succeed there without his, ^{practically} ~~in practice~~, sur-
 rendering his sovereign rights into her hands. Austria, on the
 other hand, favoured the Augustenburg claimant, for she counted on
 thereby obtaining the support of the minor German states. The
 Augustenburg succession, in fact, was the only hope for Austria.
 She could not continue to occupy and administer the Duchies in-
 definitely, and the possession of either or both ~~for~~ them would 34.
 be merely a burden to her; but, if she withdrew from the joint
 occupation, without seeing an independent ruler established there,
 she was simply giving permission to Prussia to seize both the
 provinces, and would find herself in the position of having made
 a war in order to give Prussia an expensive present. Austria
 began to see that she had made a fool of herself, and Rechberg,
 Bismarck's admirer ^{he} and his dupe, was dismissed, to be succeeded by
 the honest though not brilliant Mensdorff. ^{He} ~~Mensdorff~~ made a
 sincere effort to come to an agreement with Prussia, and was 35.
 ready to make very large concessions; but Bismarck blocked every
 proposal on one excuse or another, at the same time accusing
 Austria, at one time of bad faith, at another of ~~the~~ wish to force
 a war upon Prussia.

~~It was obvious that Bismarck was deliberately putting off the
 settlement, and the British government was full of fears as to
 the outcome. Napier reported his belief that the Prussian minis-
 ter was trying to postpone a crisis until some fortunate chance
 should throw Austria into difficulties elsewhere.~~

^{"reported Napier,"}
 "I left His Excellency ^A under the impression that as long as no
 external agency on the part of foreign governments or on the
 part of the Diet is introduced, the direct relations between

Austria and Prussia are not likely to be seriously affected by what has taken place..... I am persuaded of the pacific inclinations of M. de Bismarck in this matter....and I believe that ^{36.} barring external intervention the relations of ~~the~~ two Cabinets might for a length of time be continued in this provisional state undisturbed, yet we ought not to be blind to the dangers which might be raised by irritations from without.... It cannot be to ~~the~~ the interest of Prussia to bring French arms and French influence across the Rhine. On the other hand it seems demonstrable that the Prussian government has, even in regard to Austria, as cogent motives for coming to terms as for keeping the question open.---It is the fashion here to say that the longer ^{37.} the settlement of the Duchies is delayed the more the views of Prussia will be advanced." Napier, however, does not agree with this. "No doubt also Austria might ~~be~~ by an unlucky conjunction in her foreign affairs be driven to purchase the neutrality and alliance of Prussia by large concessions. The inclinations of the population of the Duchies will not, however, alone determine the question. As long as there is an Austrian corporal or an Austrian commissioner in Slesvig-Holstein all the popular wishes in the world prompted or supported from Berlin or by the force of ^{38.} circumstances will not annex the Duchies to Prussia, nor is the expectation of disturbance in Europe a safe or just basis for political calculation. Europe is remarkably quiet.----Austria may not experience any perplexity on the side of Hungary or Italy for years to come. What figure would the Prussian Cabinet cut under a prolonged and pacific ^{joint} occupation of the Duchies, vainly whistling for a political storm to expand the sails of

their ambition? They would offer a spectacle of disappointment and defeat. The Prussian Cabinet has made high pretensions and has aroused great expectations.... These pretensions and these successes are now at stake. If the Prussian minister be moderate and practical he may secure much of what he has aspired to and obtain credit for wisdom as well as for courage, if he grasps at vast and hazardous aims he may possibly succeed but he may not improbably sacrifice his own increasing reputation the credit of his Sovereign and the interests of his country. Fortune will not be nailed to any mast, she has been remarkably constant to Prussia for the last two years, but she may possibly be on the point of passing to Vienna." 39.

Lord Napier's epigrammatic and metaphorical style is not always easy to follow, but the drift of his remarks is clear. He thought Bismarck was postponing a settlement until European disturbances made one more favourable for Prussia possible. He was so far right in this; but he did not understand that Bismarck intended to make sure that there were disturbances, and that he would not be content to wait in hope of them. 40.

In the late summer tension became acute, and actual rumours of war began to fly about, including one peculiarly horrible tale--- viz., that Prussia was making overtures to Italy for an alliance. 41. The British government, therefore, were correspondingly relieved when the meeting of the two sovereigns and their ministers at Gastein offered hope of a peaceful settlement. These hopes were somewhat dashed when the Convention of Gastein was published. The Convention showed on its face that it was not likely to be long-lived and was, in fact, said to be only a provisional arrangement.

(21) 17.3.65. F.O. Prussia 574.

It was ~~(in fact)~~ too good to be true. Prussia, fresh from a great military success, and an even more impressive diplomatic triumph, had consented to an arrangement which left her, in possession of Schleswig, indeed, but with that province separated from her by an Austrian Holstein, which would cripple any attempt to develop the new province and the Prussian naval power. On the other hand, Austria was saddled with a Holstein, useless to her, and separated from her other territories by the length of Germany. Not the slightest concession had been made to Liberal public opinion in Germany, or the wishes of the Duchies themselves. "Schleswig-Holsteinism" had received its deathblow. As for the Prince of Augustenburg, Prussian lawyers, burrowing in the Archives, did not take long to prove that his claim was entirely mythical, and that Christian IX had been indisputably the legal heir to both Duchies --- until, of course, he surrendered his sovereignty to Prussia and Austria after the war. 42. 43.

Indignation was extreme on the publication of the Convention. shrieks of agony arose from the "Coburg Clique", and Victoria was so enraged that she was ready to declare war on the spot. In Germany, too, hatred of Prussia rose to fever-heat: but it was in the Duchies themselves that the greatest consternation was shown. Whatever may have been the object of the Schleswig-Holstein Party, it may be confidently stated that it was not annexation to Prussia. And now the Duchies, whose indivisibility had been so solemnly protested, were severed unscrupulously by their own champions, and their hopes of independence were at an end. 44.

The British representative in Berlin was first informed of the Convention by the honeyed tongue of Bismarck, who painted it in such roseate hues that his victim actually conveyed to him the official congratulations of Great Britain,--- and thereby earned a sharp rebuke for placing in an awkward position Lord Russell, who had already penned what Benedetti used to call "une dépêche comminatoire". This document, sent as a circular round Europe, was not to be presented to the foreign governments officially; but 45. as it was published in the press it caused a good deal of comment, for Russell had expressed his indignation and disapproval in quite his old manner.

"It might have been expected that when treaties were thus annulled the popular feeling of Germany, the wishes of the people of the Duchies themselves, and the opinion of the majority of the Diet so explicitly put forth by Austria and Prussia in the sittings of the Conference of London would have been recognized in their place. In this manner if one order of rights had 46. been overthrown, another title derived from the assent of the

people would have been set up, and that title might have been received with respect and maintained with a prospect of permanence.----But all rights, old and new, whether founded on the solemn compact of sovereigns or on the clear expression of the popular will have been set at nought by the Convention of Gastein/ and the dominion of force is the sole power acknowledged or regarded.----Violence and conquest are the bases on which alone the partitioning Powers found their agreement.----Her Majesty's Government deeply lament the disregard thus shown to 47. the principles of public right, and the legitimate claims of a people to be heard as to the disposal of their own destiny."

Unsatisfactory as the arrangement was, it seemed to have removed the danger of war for the present. Soon, however, the British government were again alarmed by ~~German~~ suspicions that Bismarck was on the point of concluding a secret treaty with France, in order to win Napoleon's support for the annexation of Holstein also to Prussia, in return for the cession of the Rhinish provinces to France. Lord Napier, however, ~~was~~, though of a romantic disposition, ^{was} not altogether blind to what was 48. going on before his eyes, and he did not believe that Bismarck would sell the Rhine for Holstein. "It would be unjust to suppose," he wrote, "That M. de Bismarck would lightly relinquish the Rhine provinces of Prussia for the sake of Slesvig-Holstein I can well believe that M. de Bismarck would contemplate a slight rectification of the Rhine frontier in exchange for french (sic) connivance in Slesvig-Holstein, but nothing like a considerable cession of territory. In the fertile imagination of M. de Bismarck schemes for territorial redistribution have no doubt often been revolved, but I am satisfied that if he has 49.

contemplated the partition of Rhenish Prussia between France and some German state it has been in exchange for the consolidation of the whole of North Germany under the Prussian Crown not for the acquisition of outlying dominions which he believes he can secure on much cheaper terms. My own impression is that Bismarck will only promise to respect the wishes of Holstein and possibly cede back North Slesvig, but he might not keep his promises." (22) (17)

This is not an altogether bad forecast of what occurred: but the British government had not yet allowed the consolidation of North Germany to enter into their calculations. However, the existence of a secret treaty was persistently denied by Drouyn de Lhuys, the winter passed with perfect tranquillity in Germany, save that Bismarck and the Liberals were quarrelling in the Prussian Chambers; and the alarm gradually died away. In London, other ^{matters} ~~events~~ called away ^{for} their attention. The Turkish Empire was as usual in a scrape, and events in the Danubian Principalities were pointing to revolution. At home an important change took place in the government. Lord Palmerston died, Lord Russell became Premier, and his place as Foreign Secretary was filled by the Earl of Clarendon. 57.

The change was, to all appearance, not a favourable one for Prussia. Clarendon was a man of no very striking ability or force of character, but one who charmed all who knew him by the loftiness, purity, and sweetness of his disposition. He had felt, almost as much as Morier, the cruel disappointment when the policy of Bismarck had disgraced the high aims of the German

Liberal party: but he had not the vitality, the recuperative power, of the younger man, and he had forgotten Germany for the moment in his ^{abhorrence} ~~hate~~ of Bismarck and what Bismarck stood for. It is a curious and almost tragic spectacle to observe the resentment and desire for revenge which animated this high-minded and over-refined old man, from the moment when he flung his passionate "Have a care how long this will last!" at Bernstorff when the London Conference broke up, and through the ensuing years, when he fought his second, losing fight with Bismarck. Clarendon stood, perhaps, in the moral elevation of his character, above most of his colleagues; but, as the prospect of war drew near, none of them watched with such burning eagerness as he to see Prussia made to pay for what she had done. This apostle of peace was almost hoping for war. Even as he made his proposals for a reconciliation of the enemies, his suppressed excitement burst forth in strange indiscretions and contradictory statements. From the signing of the Gastein Convention, the attempts of the Foreign Office to soothe the susceptibilities of Prussia cease; there are no further assurances of sympathy and friendship. Disapproval of Prussia's course was general.

Shortly before the Convention of Gastein was signed, and while war was in the air, Mensdorff had confided to Lord Bloomfield that he had had warning that Prussia was making secret approaches to Italy for an understanding in case of war; "and though he was not an alarmist, he must admit matters were becoming each day more serious, and Austria must be looking to her interests.." 84.

The idea of a Prusso-Italian Alliance was sufficiently startling to make British statesmen incredulous of its possibility. It was a very obvious step on the part of Prussia, and yet, to them it was so peculiarly horrible! Nothing could be more natural than that the two states which had a quarrel with Austria should come to a mutual understanding, but the sight of Michael and Lucifer as brothers-in-arms could not have been more astounding. Confusion! Whither was this spectre of Nationalism leading a devoted British public? The simplest thing was certainly to turn one's eyes away from this distressing spectacle of young Italia seduced by the Wendish boor, and refuse to credit the possibility. ~~This is what Russell inclined to do, but he was nevertheless unpleasantly perturbed.~~ 85.

The first hint of a ~~possible~~ Prusso-Italian rapprochement came in May, 1865, when Elliot, British minister at Florence, wrote to his government, "the Prussian minister at this court has been

instructed to show the ~~wish of his~~ government to put the relations of the two countries upon a footing of greater intimacy than has hitherto prevailed between them. Count Usedom is personally most favourably disposed towards Italy, but his government have not till now appeared to share his sentiments." (25)

There was, however, as yet no real dread in London of an Astro-Prussian War, and probably no importance was attached to this information; but ^{later,} when a crisis seemed imminent, and was postponed by the Convention of Gastein, such rumours became more interesting, ~~and about this time~~ Mr Herries, who was officiating during Elliot's absence, reported that Usedom had said to him, that if Prussia and Austria went to war, he would "not advise this government to stir, because the war, if confined to the question of the Duchies, would not last long. Austria would be sure to yield very soon to our demands, peace in Germany would be quickly restored, and then Italy if she had taken the opportunity of this quarrel to attack Venetia would find herself exposed alone to the vengeance of Austria." Herries, however, was not convinced of Usedom's sincerity, and added, "It appears however that communications in a different sense were made---I am unable to say exactly when---by the Prussian legation here to the Italian government.---I more than once tried to ascertain in what light General la Marmora viewed the state of affairs in Germany but I always found him reserved and unwilling to say anything beyond merely commonplace remarks... This morning I found General la Marmora much more communicative than on previous occasions, and as he broached the subject of the recent dispute between Austria and Prussia I took the opportunity to ask him what line

(23) Encl to F.O., 11 May 65, F.O. Italy 72.

his government would have been disposed to take;.....and whether any endeavours had been made by Prussia to persuade him to take part in the contest. It would have been very difficult, he replied, with a strong emphasis on those words, for Italy to abstain from doing so. He then told me that Prussia had indeed made overtures to which he had replied that if a definite proposal were submitted to the Italian Government they would declare their intentions....." La Marmora went on to say that he would have considered as a necessary security "an undertaking on the part of Prussia not to lay down arms until Italy had obtained the cession of Venetia." Herries believed that the coolness and caution of la Marmora had given offence to Prussia, and caused some personal feeling against the General. "I have often been struck by the bitterness of his" (Usedom) "criticisms, his eagerness to find fault with the present ministers for all they have done and all they have left undone, and the very slighting---I might almost say contemptuous---manner in which he has spoken of them"

During the winter a lull came, and the alarm about Italy was almost forgotten in London. It was the general opinion that a peaceful solution would be the ultimate result, partly because Bismarck would not really dare to go as far as a declaration of war, and partly because Austria was earnestly and sincerely desirous of peace. She had, during the first half of 1865, swallowed one insult after another in the meekest manner. Even Bismarck's abrupt announcement that he was going to turn the port of Kiel (which was supposed to be in the joint control of the two governments) into a Prussian naval base, had been passed with only a protest.

Sept. (24) Herries to FO, 4 Sept. 1865. FO Italy, 73.
 (24) F.O. Italy, 73. 4.9.65.

"Austria seems ready to make any concession rather than adopt a course that might lead to a serious complication," Bloomfield had reported in April 1865. Mensdorff was very hopeful, and was convinced that Bismarck would not push matters to extremity; though just before the Gastein meeting he had become a little anxious. His continual song was, "Prussia was only trying how far she could go.... M. de Bismarck was becoming more reasonable... These proceedings were no doubt meant to intimidate and to make believe that Prussia was thinking of supporting her projects in the Elbe Duchies by armed intervention if Austria persisted in her present course of resisting these plans, but he could not believe Prussia was serious."²⁵⁾

Bismarck's visit to Biarritz in the autumn of 1865, and his interviews with Napoleon and his ministers caused a fresh alarm, but this too passed off, as nothing happened, and Bismarck's own language was most conciliatory. He assured Napier that he would not quarrel with Austria about such a trifle as Slesvig-Holstein. "If she treated him fairly he would adhere to the Austrian alliance and would accept the Duke of Oldenburg or the Prince of Augustenburg or anyone who might be selected under the terms which Prussia had a right to expect."²⁶⁾

These auspicious omens, however, did not long continue. A tone of asperity soon reappeared in the Prussian correspondence

25) Bloomfield to F.O., 8 June, 13 July, 25 July 1865. F. O. Austria, 684-5.

26) Napier to F.O., 2 Jan. 1866. F.O. Prussia, 573.

ence; Austria was accused of fostering Augustenburg intrigues in the Duchies, and the accusation was not without base, for the Prince of Augustenburg was residing in Holstein and plaining his woes to all the world. Prussia demanded that he should be expelled, and Austria replied that she could not turn a German prince out of a German province without distinct evidence against him. Bismarck, also, threatened to revive the question of federal reform in Germany---a fruitful source of disagreement. Rumours of war were again in the air: Bismarck was seen to be bent on a quarrel, and the hopes of peace were now founded on the peace-loving disposition of the King of Prussia, who, it was said, would never allow himself to be dragged into a war with Austria. The governments of those days had a pathetic faith in the pacific spirit of this old gentleman, though it invariably proved a broken reed, and they eagerly swallowed his benevolent platitudes. Bismarck knew his royal master better: he was aware that the King's love for peace was as nothing when weighed in the balance with his hereditary Hohenzollern greed of gain. L'appetit vient en mangeant. 65.

The alarm, however, was sufficient to make Russell and Clarendon take what steps they could think of in the interests of peace. They politely suggested that Austria should abandon Holstein to the importunities of Bismarck, just as a nurse makes a docile child give up its toys to a naughty howling one. "I observed to Prince Metternich," said Lord Cowley, "that I did not see that the annexation of the Duchies should necessarily become a cause of war unless Austria had determined to make it a casus belli. The small Austrian force in the Duchy of Holstein with no line 66.

of communication with Austria could not possibly prevent the forcible seizure of that Duchy by Prussia. It would not be necessary and certainly would not be politic in Prussia to invade or attack Austrian possessions in order to secure the object which M. de Bismarck had in view... (27) (H) This rather vague speech appears to mean that Austria was to clear out "bag and baggage" and make a present of Holstein to Prussia, without any arrangement being concluded as to the subsequent relations of the two states in Germany. It was rather unfortunate that all the proposed plans involved Austria's immolating herself on the altar of peace. The Italian-Prussian alliance was again in the air, and both Britain and France were pointing out to Austria how she might make a friend of Italy. It was all very well, however, to tell Austria that it was to her own best interest to give up Venetia, and that she would be intrinsically stronger without her Italian provinces. To Austria it appeared doubtful whether the severance of Venetia were, not a health-giving operation, but the first sign of her dissolution. (She thought that she was being asked to show an amount of self-sacrifice of which no state could be capable.) She was, it appeared, to hand over Venetia to Italy and Holstein to Prussia, all in the cause of peace: but what was she to get in return? Austria was in no wise bashful in stating what she would like: she would only consider it worth while to cede Venetia, she told Great Britain, if she got a slice of Silesia in exchange.

This was all very good, but Silesia belonged to Prussia, and Russell did not contemplate putting the screw on Bismarck. This

(27) (H) F.O. France. 1612 Cowley to F.O. 1 March 1866. ✓

being out of the question, what could be found wherewith to bribe Austria? How convenient it would have been had Austria been a colonial power! There are always scraps of colonies obtainable. 70. But in Europe nothing could be found without infringing some moral or political law. Italy (who was at the moment on the verge of bankruptcy) had a bright idea, and offered to buy Venetia for £40,000,000. The British Government, without stopping to demand, "Show me first your penny," eagerly took up the suggestion and mentioned it at Vienna: but no definite efforts were made to follow it up, which, in the light of her later history, we may guess to have been just as well for Italy.

There was unfortunately no competition among the minor states of Germany for the privilege of being under the protection of Austria; as a governing power the Empire was not popular. There 71. was probably only one spot in Europe where a transfer to ~~the~~ Austrian ~~government~~ would have been popular, and that was Poland. Austria was the only one of the Partitioning Powers of 1772 which had managed to give its Polish subjects any measure of contentment. The Poles under Prussian rule would have welcomed with joy such an exchange, and ~~forever this transfer would have been in accordance with the interests of the Poles themselves, with those of Europe, and with the dictates of a higher political morality.~~ Such a transfer would not have been open to the objections which could be raised against placing any other territory under Austrian rule, for neither the principle of National- 72. ity nor that of Self-determination need be outraged by this arrangement; they would, on the contrary, be favoured by it. ~~Such~~ ^{The} plan, however, could only have been carried out by Austria, France and Britain uniting with full understanding to force

their demands upon Prussia and Russia, and it might even have led to a European war. No British minister then living could have contemplated such a prospect, and ~~(probably none of them were capable of the generosity, tact, and sympathy which would have been necessary at this time to produce a real understanding with France. No one so much as~~ ^{They no more} dreamed of offering Austria a bit of Prussian Poland, any more than they would have offered her a plantation in the moon.

^{in the Balkans} It was ~~(not on the Northern, but on the South-Easterly frontiers~~ 73. of Austria, that a possible compensation was looked for. Austria was thought to have ~~cast greedy eyes for some time past towards Bosnia and Herzegovina; but the other powers found it more convenient to offer her~~ ^{the} provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, ~~(at this time)~~ officially termed the Danubian Principalities, ~~which~~ had had a semi-independent existence for a few years past under the suzerainty of the Sultan and the protection of the powers. Neither the suzerainty of the Sultan, however, nor the protection of the powers, had been able to prevent Moldo-Wallachia from being miserably misgoverned by the hospodar, Prince Couza. Matters there were rapidly approaching a crisis, and it was natural that the possibility of offering the provinces to Austria should occur to observers. The matter was mentioned between 74. Lord Clarendon and the Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, French ambassador at London, and received some sort of vague approval from the British minister. As soon as the affair passed from the realm of speculation into that of possibility, however, Clarendon seemed inclined to withdraw his words. By this time matters had been brought to a head by ~~a~~ revolution in the Principalities, and the deposition of the troublesome Prince Couza. La Tour

d'Auvergne again spoke of a possible exchange to Clarendon, who now replied that it was doubtful if the Emperor Franz Josef would give his consent to such a plan, and who appeared to rely rather on the idea of the purchase of Venetia by Italy. 75.

Drouyn de Lhuys had already approached Cowley about the matter.

"What was evidently at the bottom of his thoughts was the possibility of turning the present crisis in the Principalities to account in making some new arrangement with Austria for the cession of Venetia," ^{Cowley reported} Drouyn de Lhuys had hinted this to Metternich, who had received it with "timidity." "In fact, as M. Drouyn de Lhuys had expressed himself to me, the crisis had come too soon---Austria had too much upon her hands." ^{(28) (11)} Drouyn de Lhuys therefore proposed a Conference to be held immediately. Great Britain agreed, though she at first suggested Constantinople as the place where the Conference should be held---not a very suitable spot to discuss the arrangement which the French minister had in mind. ^{Later} ~~The government~~, however, ^{Paris was chosen,} afterwards agreed to Paris, and Drouyn de Lhuys wrote at once to la Tour d'Auvergne to propose a joint approach to Vienna on the subject, which, he said, might prevent a war. 76.

There is a curious discrepancy between the despatches of France and Britain at this period. The French records are full, and both Drouyn de Lhuys and la Tour d'Auvergne ^{were} ~~are~~ apparently 77.

under the belief that the British government fully shared their hopes and wishes. ⁽²⁹⁾ The British records are singularly meagre, and all that exist present the cold and disapproving tone of the Cowley despatch quoted above. No despatch of Clarendon reporting his conversation with la Tour d'Auvergne is to be found, nor is

⁽²⁸⁾ ~~at~~ F.O. France, 1612. 21.2.66. ^{Feb.} ⁽²⁹⁾ ~~at~~ Les Origines, No. 1811, etc.

any private letter on the subject published in Maxwell's "Life." We cannot therefore decide what justification la Tour d'Auvergne had for the despatch where he reports full British approval for the plan. It is not until a week later that the British records offer any further information on the subject. On the 9th of March Nigra, the Italian ambassador at Paris, called on Cowley, and suggested that on the meeting of the Conference a favourable opportunity might offer to settle the Italian question, Austria ceding Venetia to Italy, and receiving some compensation in the Principalities instead.

"I pointed out to my Italian colleague the little probability there was of obtaining under present circumstances the consent of Austria to any such scheme, even supposing the Porte to be prevailed upon to consider it favourably.... Setting aside other difficulties perhaps still more insuperable, what use, I asked, could there be in putting forward such a proposal against the opposition and resistance of the parties most interested..... As M. de Nigra continued to press his argument, I considered it right to let him clearly understand that whatever might be the opinions or wishes of H.M. Government in the abstract, he must not expect the slightest support from them to any proposal which might be made for the alienation of the Principalities from their Sovereignty of the Sultan." (sic)

The Italian government had approached Elliot on the subject (31) (32) About the same time as M. Drouyn de Lhuys made his advances.

"Whatever may be the difficulties in the way of such a scheme, it is considered that all the Powers which have the peace of Europe

(30) of February 28th.
(32) On March 1st.

(31) F.O. France. 1613. Cowley to F.O. 9 March 1866.

at heart are interested in overcoming them, and in finding, if possible, a solution to a question which cannot very long remain

unsettled without great probability of it leading to a war, ⁽³³⁾ ~~(11)~~ *whole Elliot*

On March 12th the same reply was sent to Nigra and to his government. Great Britain would never consent to hand over the Roumanian people against their will to the rule of Austria, and neither Russia nor Turkey would ever give their consent to such a scheme. It was useless to discuss the subject. ⁽³⁴⁾ ~~(21)~~ Apparently France was given to understand the same: for---except for a few expressions of regret from la Marmora---the subject of the Roumanian Exchange disappears from the despatches.

How is the difference between the accounts of this incident given by the British and by the French records to be accounted for? If the interview between Cowley and Drouyn de Lhuys was as described by Cowley, how did Drouyn de Lhuys draw from it the impression that Britain would support his plan? And what did Clarendon say to la Tour d'Auvergne? Probably only the private letters of Cowley and Clarendon could decide this. It may be pointed out, however, (1) that in Lord Cowley's despatches for the period 1863-6, we find on several occasions phrases to this effect: "M. Drouyn de Lhuys said that he had made such-and-such a statement to me, and I at once denied that he had ever done so". ⁽³⁵⁾ and (2) that Lord Clarendon's statements were similarly misunder-

- ~~F.O. Italy 83. (34) F.O. France 1602. Clarendon to Cowley, 12 March 1866.~~
 See above, Chapter II, p. 228, and below, p. 326.
 33) Elliot to F.O., 1 March 1866. F.O. Italy, 83.
 34) Clarendon to Cowley, 12 March 1866, F.O. France, 1602.
 35) See above, p. , and below, p. .

stood by the Russian ambassador, shortly after this, and on an occasion of ^{equal} ~~almost greater~~ importance. (36) ~~117~~

Taken in conjunction with the mystery of the Roumanian Exchange, Cowley's various remarks open up an enthralling vista.^{83.} What would one not give to know the hints that ~~Drouyn~~ de Lhuys may have dropped, and Cowley failed to pick up!.... They might alter our estimate of French and British policy..... But why did Cowley fail to pick up the hints? Was it intentional or unintentional? Did he think that he ought to ignore every underhand, suspicious proposal that was not spoken out clear and fair? Was his knowledge of French not equal to the more subtle nuances of that language? Was he growing deaf? Or was he---for we know from himself that he disliked and distrusted Drouyn de Lhuys----^{84.} merely nasty? (~~Whatever the reason, it seems unfortunate that all through a most critical period Great Britain should have been represented at the court of France by an ambassador with whom such misconstructions were liable to occur.~~)

It must be remembered, however, that we have no account of what Clarendon, on his side, said, save the French one. It is possible that Clarendon did utter some impulsive expression of approval, and that Drouyn de Lhuys interpreted Cowley's formalities in the light of la Tour d'Auvergne's reports from London. It is not impossible that Clarendon seized the first suggestion of such an arrangement with enthusiasm, and only after reflection, perhaps after a discussion in the Cabinet, perceived the objections to it. Absorbed in the effort to counteract the schemes of Prussia, he may have forgotten, for the moment, ^{both} the traditional policy of ⁸⁵

(36) ~~117~~ See below, p. 326:7.

his country towards Turkey, and ~~even~~ the principle of Nationality.

It will be noted that the British objections to the plan are three in number: (1) Austria will not be willing to accept; (2) Russia and Turkey will refuse their consent; (3) The Roumanian people must not be handed over to Austria against their will. The third of these reasons was not mentioned to France, or at least la Tour, if he heard it, did not consider it worth while reporting.

The first objection we may dismiss. Austria would naturally put as high a price as possible on her consent; but there was no harm in trying to persuade ^{her} and Britain and France, acting together, would have a great influence upon her decisions.

As to the second point, it was certainly very probable that Russia and Turkey would refuse their consent. It was not of any importance should Turkey do so. No one, in reality, cared in the slightest what the Porte might say, because it was quite unable to do anything to enforce its wishes, which had been ignored often enough already, even in regard to the Principalities themselves. As for Russia, it might be possible to come to an arrangement with her, or it might be possible to override her opposition. (37.) Certainly it was not necessary to refuse to enter on the question at all, without trying to ascertain her views.

As to the wishes of the Roumanian people, upon every other point ~~but~~ this the British government was strenuously opposing the wishes of the Roumanian people.

The Exchange project did not imply the handing over of a free people into slavery; it was simply the transfer of two small provinces from the rule of the Turk to that of Austria. (This, (37.)

(37.) Talleyrand submitted the French scheme to Russia, and was

at least, was the British view. They could not look forward fifty years and see those two small provinces a stirring, thriving, independent state, nor were they aware of the strength of the movement going on in Moldo-Wallachia.

Roumania---people were beginning to use this name in preference to any other---wanted to work out her own salvation, and find a place among the nations. To do so, ~~she saw three necessities~~. She wanted union; she wanted independence from Turkey; she wanted a just, unprejudiced and capable prince to pilot her through dangerous waters. On all these points Britain, while refusing to hand over ~~the~~ Roumanians to Austrian thralldom, was exerting every effort to ~~checkmate~~ ^{oppose} her.

British policy, had it been successful, would have condemned Roumania to a far more hopeless existence than she could have known under Austrian rule. Some advantage must necessarily have accrued to her from the connection with a great European power, far more civilised than herself: but had the wishes of the British government been carried out, Roumania would have been divided into two separate provinces, ruled by two native Roumanian nobles of the same class as the worthless Couza, and in this condition would have remained under the suzerainty of a backward and Mohammedan power, until war or revolution delivered her.

Moldo-Wallachia had been practically united in 1858, in accordance with their own wishes, by the efforts of France and Russia, and much against the will of Britain. In the words of Lord Cowley "In order to obtain a temporary triumph over the policy of H.M.

told that the Czar had written "inadmissible jusqu'à la guerre," upon it. He asked his informant if it was "jusqu'à la guerre exclusivement ou exclusivement, mais je n'ai pas obtenu de réponse." He added that all important persons say that war at present is an impossibility for Russia. (Les Origines. 1890.)

Government." Russia had "joined in a most unholy alliance with the French government" to have Prince Couza established as Hospodar of both provinces, which had since then been governed virtually as one country, and had become deeply attached to their union, the strongest safeguard against foreign interference, whether Russian or Turkish; Couza having proved incompetent, Roumania, who well knew that none of her own nobility had the experience or the self-control necessary for such a position, wished to choose a foreign prince; a choice which would not only ensure better government, but which would almost inevitably lead in the end to independence from the Porte. The policy of Britain at the Conference was to separate the two newly-united provinces, to elect, not one foreign ^{prince}, but two native princes, and to preserve at all costs the suzerainty of Turkey. In face of this it is impossible to maintain that the refusal to support the Exchange Project was due to any consideration for the wishes of Roumania.

It was, on the contrary, like the rest of their Roumanian policy, "due to their wish to preserve the authority of Turkey, Their object was to weaken the provinces as much as possible, and place them in a position where it would be impossible for them to assert their independence. For this Roumania was to be torn in two, and denied the privilege of good government.

"I expressed dissent, on the grounds that the election of a foreign prince would be the first step towards the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, it being certain that no Christian Prince would long remain a vassal of the Porte."

38) Cowley to Clarendon, 27 Feb. 1866. F.O. France, 1613.

39) Cowley in the Conference. Cowley to Clarendon, 20 March, 1866. F.O. France, 1613.

"The British Government were disposed to question the wisdom of encouraging these aspirations. They believed that the welfare prosperity and peace of the Principalities would be better served by separation than by union," as union under one prince would encourage a spirit of independence ⁽⁴⁰⁾ ~~(such was the decision of the Cabinet).~~ ⁽¹⁷⁾

"However tempting it might be in the abstract...union under a foreign prince must be the first step towards the dissolution of the Turkish Empire. For instance, the demands...appeared to be already coupled with the pretension to have foreign representatives;...a pretension, I added, which would never be listened to." ⁽⁴¹⁾ ~~(27)~~
So spoke Cowley to Drouyn de Lhuys.

The Turkish policy of Britain was originally adopted as a check to the advancing power of Russia. ⁽⁹⁴⁾ ~~(This aim may seem to have been lost sight of in their anxiety to follow tradition, for Russia would undoubtedly have preferred to see Roumania as a province of Turkey rather than of Austria, and Roumania in Austria's hands would have been much more dangerous to Russia.)~~ What the government really feared, ~~(however)~~, was that in taking this one province from Turkey, and giving it to Austria, they would give the signal for a general spoliation. Russia would perhaps try to upset the Black Sea Treaty, the Balkan provinces were always on the verge of revolution, and Crete was in a frightful condition, with Greece longing to go to her relief. They feared that they would pull out the foundation stone, and that the whole edifice would come tumbling down. What real use such a decrepit and feeble defence could be against a power as

⁽⁴⁰⁾ F.O. France 1602. ⁽⁴¹⁾ F.O. France 1614. Cowley to Clarendon 26 March 1866.

solid and terrific as they imagined Russia to be; and whether several ~~several~~ sturdy independent Balkan kingdoms, or a stronger and more contented Austria, could not do the work as well, they did not stop to consider; nor did they see that Turkey's Balkan possessions were really a source of weakness to her, though they saw well enough that this was the case with Austria as to Venetia.

It may be asked, where was British idealism, where the cult of Nationality, when such a policy was adopted towards a small state struggling bravely for existence? But the Liberal government were quite equal to the occasion. ~~Within the space of a few weeks,~~ ^{already} they had unalterably convinced themselves that the Roumanians did not really want to be united. Moldavia, they said, had been forced into the union against her will; Moldavia was being oppressed by Wallachia; they were only helping poor little Moldavia to free herself from an unnatural and detestable connection.

The Exchange Project being abandoned---for in face of direct opposition from Britain it could not have been carried out---the Conference sat to decide the questions of Union and of the choice of a Foreign Prince. Britain was the only power which wanted to break the union---if we exclude Turkey, whose representative was literally under the orders of Lord Cowley. Russia, however, joined these two in opposing a foreign prince. France ^{the establishment of Roumania's ambitions} strongly favoured both and made every effort that power to act with her, even to the extent of asking ~~Prussia~~ to nominate the Prince, and promising to support whatever candidate she selected. "I said I was quite sure H.M. Government would not undertake so invidious or so responsible a task as to make any such selection," said Cowley. After this it was hardly fair in

the government to ~~persist in the idea~~ that France's whole policy was dictated by the object of establishing exclusive influence for herself in Roumania.

In the meantime Roumania did not feel disposed to wait for the decision of a Conference in which no power save France seemed to show any disposition to consider her desires. The Roumanian parliament dissolved itself, ordered the election of a new assembly, and a provisional government was established, whose first action was to offer the crown to the young brother of the King of the Belgians. This prince having refused, the convention transferred the offer to Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, a relative of the King of Prussia. The British government was divided between rage at the daring of the upstart provinces, and at what they considered the treachery of France, for they inclined to blame her for the whole proceeding. Their attitude was one of stern disapproval.

"My opinion was that the Conference should abstain from any active interference.... and should limit its transactions to a passive acceptance or refusal of the proceedings of the Provisional Government. If this course was to be consistently followed, the Principalities would find themselves in a dilemma which must eventually force them to keep within the limits of existing treaties.... I told His Excellency" (Drouyn de Lhuys) "that the proceedings in the Principalities, by whomsoever counselled, must, if persisted in, restore to Russia all her former influence in these countries. This persistence in pursuit of a Foreign Prince which both the Porte and Russia were resolved to counteract,

(1). F.O. 1613-4-5, etc.

(2) The Prince of Hohenzollern had been suggested by Roumanian plotters in 1865, and Napoleon III had given some sort of approval. The plan was then abandoned, and revived after the Belgian Prince refused. Cawley to F.O. 17 April 1866. F.O. France

1614

would end in an alliance between them.... M. Drouyn de Lhuys could not deny the truth of my observations. He assured me that the Imperial Government had nothing to say to the present doings in the Principalities, but in giving me this assurance, he so far ^{101.} betrayed himself, as to show that he had been for some time aware of the intrigues in progress for the nomination of a Prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.... He attempted to insinuate that he had spoken to me on the subject, an insinuation which I at once ^{(44.) (11)} repudiated."

"It would be seen that after a time, the Provisional Government finding their utter helplessness, would ^{(45.) (21)} propose something that could be agreed to by the Conference."

Time passed, however, and the Roumanians ignored the dilemma in which, according to Lord Cowley, they found themselves. The ^{102.} Provisional Government, far from discovering its "utter helplessness", went its wicked way undisturbed. The Prince of Hohenzollern accepted. His father and his King disapproved, but he had a private interview with Bismarck, immediately after which he left his regiment to spend a nice holiday in Switzerland; appeared in Roumania; and was acclaimed there. The Prussian government repudiated him, but Charles had Bismarck's approval in his pocket, and was not alarmed. Cowley and his government began to realise that it was the Conference, and not Roumania, that was helpless. Nothing could prevent the Provisional Government from doing what it liked, since it was too thick-skinned to be sensitive to moral ^{103.} condemnation. Prussia and France, ^{it was evident} apparently, secretly approved its conduct. Neither Britain nor Austria could transport an army

^(44.) ^{(45.) (11)} E.O. France 1615, Cowley to Clarendon 17 April 1866 ✓
Do 19 Apr. 1866, F.O. France 1615

down the Danube and expel Prince Charles by force. Britain and Turkey could not allow Russia to undertake this task, and even if public opinion in Europe allowed Turkey to do it, Russia would not. The government told themselves that this unpleasant state of affairs could not last. "If left alone the whole fabric⁴⁶⁾ of a foreign Prince (sic) would collapse of itself." They were furious with France. They believed that the King of Prussia had⁴⁷⁾ permitted his cousin to go as a favour to Napoleon, and Clarendon told la Tour d'Auvergne that "The Prince of Hohenzollern's election had been approved by the Prussian government as a measure of hostility and offence to Austria and that the King of Prussia would not have sanctioned it if he had not had reason to believe that his doing so would be agreeable to the government of the Emperor." 104.

The Conference felt that its position was undignified, and thinking that "it could at least withdraw," it adjourned itself indefinitely, and eventually faded out of existence. Britain made the best of a bad job, and advised the Porte to acknowledge⁴⁸⁾ Prince Charles, which was in the end done. Roumania was safe--- 105.
and a Prussian prince was established in the Balkans."

46) Cowley to Clarendon, 29 March, 1866. F.O. France, 1616.

47) Clarendon to Cowley, 22 May 1866, F.O. France, 1605.

48) Principal Grant Robertson refers to the Exchange Project and the Hohenzollern Election in the following terms: "But the acceptance against his father's wish of the principedom by Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen (after an interview with Bismarck) and his rapid departure for Bucharest checkmated the proposal (for the exchange) and placed, to the disgust of Austria, a Hohenzollern

sentinel beyond the Carpathians in charge of the destinies of a Latin race." (Robertson. p.201.) With this estimate the present writer is not able to agree. The Prince of Hohenzollern was not elected until April 13th, whereas Great Britain definitely refused to support the Exchange Project more than a month before ---her answer being given to Italy upon March 12th, to France upon March 9th. Without the support of Britain the project had no real chance of success. Even her passive tolerance would not have been enough. It would have required the active influence of Britain and France in concert to induce Austria to accept, and to enforce the scheme on the provinces themselves and on Russia. Had Turkey known she had the opinion of both Britain and Russia and her side she would have been able to resist the plan actively. France might, alone, have overcome the reluctance of Austria, but France could not have faced the opposition of the whole of Europe in support of the scheme. There is every evidence to believe that the French government entirely abandoned the idea when Britain refused consent, and that they were sincere in pressing for a foreign prince instead. As to Venetia another plan was adopted, as will be seen later. Hence Bismarck's support of Prince Charles was little more than making assurance doubly sure. One cannot say that the Exchange Project failed because of the Hohenzollern Election, when it had been dropped a month before, and when the election of the Belgian prince, with which Prussia had nothing to do, would equally have checkmated the plan if it had been still entertained. Of course Bismarck's step put a stop to any possible revival of the project.

III.

In order to follow the Roumanian incident to its close, we have passed to the end of April. We must now go back to the state of affairs as they stood in February and March, when the Austro-Prussian quarrel was still developing.

The failure of the Roumanian project, though not due to the unaided talents of Bismarck, shows how near the wind he was sailing. If it had succeeded---and though not a probable, it was a possible solution of the difficulty---Italy's assistance would have been lost to him, and on the Italian alliance really depended the success of his plans. He relied upon it to paralyse any action on the part of Great Britain and France. What dangers attended their refusal might have been made clear to the British ministers had they been able to see the despatches which Nigra, discouraged, was now writing to his chief: "Notre seule espérance se réduit aujourd'hui à une guerre d'accord avec la Prusse." 106.

Clarendon and Russell, though sensible of danger, were not yet very much alarmed. They did not believe, for the reasons already described, that a definite break would come between Prussia and Austria. Bloomfield continued to write very encouraging despatches about the pacific disposition of Mensdorff. But it takes two to make a peace as well as to make a quarrel. Lord Augustus Loftus wrote from Berlin that Bismarck was determined on war, but it was still believed that he would not be able to carry the King with him. So acute, also, was the constitutional crisis in Prussia, so deeply hated was Bismarck by the Liberals and in non-Prussian Germany, that his fall was reasonably hoped for. 108.

la Marmora, "Un Peu de Lumière," quoted ~~Les Origines~~

Still, there were dangers; and in the third week of March Britain took the important step of offering mediation to Prussia. This offer was due to the influence of the Crown Princess and of Queen Victoria, and was one of the incidents which caused Bismarck's deep detestation of the Princess. Barral reported to Italy that Bismarck was "violently excited." He rejected the mediation, saying that the offer should have been made at Vienna as it was Austria, not Prussia, that was determined on war; and he covered a point-blank refusal by the assertion that Lord Bloomfield had made the thing impossible by blabbing the proposal to all the neutral diplomats in Vienna---an indiscretion of which Lord Bloomfield appears to have been quite guiltless, so Bismarck probably invented it on the spur of the moment.

50) It was given out at the time that Britain had only appealed to Prussia to remember the engagements she had taken at the Paris Congress, and ask for the arbitration of a neutral power; but it was generally believed, in spite of this statement, that mediation had actually been offered, and the Memoirs of Lord Augustus Loftus prove that this was the case. The ambassador prints Clarendon's letters, which are worth quoting. Clarendon instructed him to remonstrate with Bismarck, saying that "as we desire to preserve the most friendly relations with Prussia, we earnestly beg him to pause before he embarks on a war of which no man can foresee the results or the termination." The appeal that Prussia should accept arbitration was then made. To accept it "would reflect great credit on Prussia." If Prussia persists in her present course she will rouse public opinion against her. As the great Protestant power of continental Europe, "with which we naturally have kindred feelings....it would be with deep regret that we should see her regarded as a common enemy, because a wilful disturber, of the peace of Europe." (7 March 1866.) On Bismarck replying that he intended no violent action, Clarendon wrote to say that he had no wish to suggest Britain should mediate, but that she would if she were asked! Bismarck then gave the reply described above. See Loftus, I, pp. 43-4.

In the meantime the alliance with Italy was being negotiated. While the Roumanian Project was still under consideration in London, reports were coming in quickly from Italy, Prussia, Austria, France. Among the reasons which Cowley gave to Nigra against Austria consenting to the Roumanian Exchange, was "the present state of the relations of that Power with Prussia, a state which might eventually involve her in war with the latter, when, if common report spoke truth, the Italian Government had resolved to make common cause with Prussia." This reason would have appeared to most persons to have the very opposite effect to that ascribed to it by Lord Cowley, and so indeed, Nigra seems to have thought. "M. de Nigra did not deny that this would infallibly happen, though he fairly enough deduced from my observation the inference that the cession of Venetia would convert Italy into a friend. I merely mention this because it led M. de Nigra to say

that Prussia had already renewed at Florence the overtures which she had made some months ago with a view of ascertaining the sentiments and intentions of the Italian Government. I asked the nature of these overtures, whether they were suggestive of an alliance or convention between Prussia and Italy, to which M. de Nigra replied that matters had not gone so far, but that Count Bismarck had received the assurance of General la Marmora that if hostilities were to occur between Prussia and Austria the assistance of Italy in the field against the latter would certainly not be wanting." (51)

Elliot's reports were to the same effect. "Although General la Marmora is far from being the most eager to engage in a war, even he plainly tells me that if one were to break out between Austria and Prussia he would not hesitate a day in taking part in it." (52)

Lord Augustus Loftus, on the other hand, was incredulous, ~~at first,~~ even after the visit of the Italian negotiator, General Govone (whom he spells indifferently, Govone, Govoni, and Gavoni,) to Berlin. On March 31st he wrote: "Whatever arrangements may be discussed between Count Bismarck and the Italian General, I do not believe that the King of Prussia will enter into or countenance any alliance of an offensive and defensive nature with Italy. I believe that Count Bismarck profits by the presence of General Gavoni ~~(sic)~~ to produce an outward shew ~~(sic)~~ of menace to Austria, and that the object he has in view is merely that of intimidation. But I cannot think that there is any serious intention on his part of concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with the Government of King Victor Emanuel." (53)

(51) F.O. France. 1613.
London 9 March 1866.

(52) F.O. Italy. 85.
London 1866.

(53) F.O. Prussia. 592.
Loftus to F.O. 31 March 1866.

At this time the terms of the alliance had been settled, shown to Benedetti, and telegraphed by him to Paris. On April 7, (the day before the Treaty was signed) Loftus wrote: "I cannot learn that beyond an exchange of opinions and assurances of mutual cooperation under certain eventualities any agreement of a binding nature has been entered into..." Only by April 28 did he get as far as, "This, I think, is a sufficient proof that a perfect understanding exists between them, whether it has taken the form of a written or a mere verbal engagement." On May 9 he wrote that the alliance was actually signed on 17 or 18 April, but he does not believe it has been ratified. On May 26 he reported the ⁵⁴⁾ratification. 114.

Long before Lord Augustus was convinced, however, it was clear that the danger was real, and British influence had been employed at Florence to prevent any treaty being signed. It was too late, however. The first warning was given by Elliot on March 30, when the matter was virtually settled. "I remarked that it appeared very undesirable for Italy prematurely to bind herself to any such course." She was pursuing "an Italian object, which might possibly in the end be found more attainable through an understanding with Austria than by an alliance with Prussia. General la Marmora said that his latest information from Vienna did not tend to encourage any such hope... Not the slightest overture of any sort or kind had been made to him; adding... that if any were to be made Austria must be aware that there was no ⁵⁵⁾time to be lost." 115.

54) Loftus to F.O., 7 April, 28 April, 29 March, 1866. F.O. Prussia, 592.

55) Elliot to F.O., 30 March 1866. F.O. Italy, 85.

that a note of acute alarm appears in the British correspondence. On the 6th of May Clarendon telegraphed: "H.M. Government advise that the Italian Government should remain strictly on the defensive, Italy has no interest in annexing the Elbe Duchies to Prussia, or in destroying the independence of the minor sovereigns of Germany; an alliance with Prussia upon these bases would make all the German powers, except Prussia, hostile to Italy----If Italy remains neutral she will not be involved in a quarrel which may embrace the whole of Europe and be fatal to the peaceful progress of the Italian monarchy." (56) (11)

Even after Austria had informed the Government that she had in her possession a copy of the secret treaty, they continued to hope against hope, and when the war had actually begun Elliot made another appeal. "I....alluded to the importance of keeping clear of all engagements with Prussia, which would have the effect of depriving the Italian Government of their freedom of action if, in the course of the war there should be an opportunity of making an arrangement by which the object of this country should be attained--- It might become necessary for Austria to abandon Venetia in order more effectually to meet Prussia in the North, and Italy should keep herself free to profit by that contingency should it arise.---An arrangement with Prussia not to make a separate peace might have the effect of obliging this country to continue the war for objects in which it has no interest, at the risk of sacrificing those which could have been secured.M. Jacini said....they made the war simply for a national object and had entered into no Convention or Compact with Prussia in regard to it." This statement was a direct untruth, (56)

(11) F.O. Italy. 83. Clarendon to Elliot 6 May 1866.

and it is almost certain that Jacini must have known that it was such. Elliot replied that la Marmora had led him to believe the contrary, but Jacini repeated that there was no more than a "moral understanding."

reported Elliot later
 "I did not ~~conceal~~ ^{report} ~~from His Royal Highness~~ (Prince Carignan)"

that all parties in England regretted to see Italy engaging herself in such a war as the present, and that even among those who most freely admitted the legitimacy of the national determination to complete the formation of the kingdom by the annexation of the provinces still wanting to it, the alliance with Prussia had gone far to alienate their sympathies:---- that in England the war was looked upon as an unnecessary and wicked war, and its authors considered almost as public enemies.---At the time I spoke I did not know who Her Majesty's ministers might be, but there was ~~so~~ a little difference of opinion on the subject in England that I felt slight hesitation in expressing myself." (58.)
not always
 The tone of these remonstrances, which is hardly in accordance with the dignity of a great power, show the extent of Clarendon's bewilderment and distress.

The truth was that an alliance between Prussia and Italy must make it impossible to offer active resistance to Prussia. This alliance once made, every step that was taken to checkmate Prussia or to help Austria was taken against Italy. Bismarck had so managed matters that the iniquitous war for furthering the ambitions of Prussia was to be also a nationalist war for realising the blameless hopes of Italy, which had been approved and encouraged by the British government. Bismarck had made mince pie of all the rights and wrongs of the question: Austria, was in their right

(57) F.O. Italy, 87, *Elliot 15 F.O.*
(2) ib. 19 June 1866 *(58.)* The same 26 June 1866
 F.O. Italy, 87.

as regards Prussia, and there she had all the sympathies of Great Britain; but Austria was as clearly in the wrong as regards Italy and by all their traditions and principles Russell and Clarendon were bound to disapprove of her conduct there. Both Nationalist and Liberal feeling prompted the Liberal government to favour the aspirations of Italy. ~~They had always been Italy's friends.~~ If any trace of coolness had ever existed in their feeling towards the new state, it was because they believed that Italy was ¹²³ too much attached to France. Now, however, even their anti-French feeling urged them to forward her ambitions. France, owing to the occupation of Rome, was at present much less popular there, and Italian statesmen, sincerely or insincerely, had for some time past assured Britain that only the possession of Venetia was necessary to turn them into the staunch allies of Britain and the ^{(59) (17)} opponents of French aggression.

With this double motive for desiring to see Italian unity completed, it will be seen how awkwardly the British government were situated once the alliance with Prussia was a fact to be reckoned ¹²⁴ with. They longed to see Austria victorious over Prussia, but how rejoice in a Prussian defeat, if it would leave Austria free to turn her arms against Italy and crush the new state? That Austria

⁽⁵⁹⁾ ~~(17)~~ "It may be freely conceded that Italy has never assumed that position of perfect independence which is her due as a great European power; and I will add that this independence cannot be expected from her till the day on which Venetia is included in the Italian kingdom.... As long as Venice remains in the hands of Austria France can count upon the Italian army as securely as upon her own whenever there may happen to be a rupture between the two Empires; but this will no longer be the case when the Italian kingdom is completed. The manifest interest of Italy will then be to keep aloof from any quarrel in which it is not directly interested." (Elliot. 27.2.65. F.O. Italy. 70.)

^{February} "I have often reproached them with their equivocal line of conduct in the East, and with their constant tendency to side with the French, rather than the British Government, whenever there might

unaided could sweep Italy off the map was certain; not Garibaldi, Mazzini and Cavour combined had ever been able to make Italian ^{volunteers} stand unsupported against trained troops, ~~nor were the Italian regulars any more dependable.~~ Then, of course, France would intervene to save her protégé, and a European war would be kindled in a twinkling.

With such ominous prospects before them it appears strange that the government did not seize every opportunity that offered to prevent Italy from committing herself to Prussia. Their efforts, as we have seen, in this direction had been somewhat half-hearted. They had, to be sure, urged Italy to be patient, and Austria to give up Venetia; but what was the use of good advice, when the one opportunity of inducing Austria to part with her transalpine possessions had been deliberately put aside? Had any other reasonable scheme been substituted for the Exchange Project, their action might have been praiseworthy, but all they had to offer was the proposal that Italy should buy Venetia, and even this was never seriously pressed at Vienna, and at the same time Austria was being encouraged by praises of her conduct in Germany. Their idea seems to have been that if they waited quietly the financial difficulties of Austria, which were very great, would incline her to accept the Italian offer to buy: but in the meantime Bismarck was hurrying on his preparations for war.

This seeming indifference was really due to the fatal optimism of the liberal government---their reluctance to believe that there would be a war, and especially their reluctance to believe,

continued) chance to be a divergence between the two. Their answer has uniformly been, "Wait till Venetia is ours, and you will see Italy become one of the most Conservative states in Europe, and as much interested in the preservation of peace as England herself" (Italy, 89.)

(Ellis to F.O. 19. 27 December 1866)

in spite of all evidence, that Italy would really ally herself with Prussia. If Italy only kept out of the war, ^{Then} they were beginning, unconsciously, to feel that war might have its advantages. Both Russell and Clarendon would have found some pleasure in seeing Prussia get a thorough drubbing: and Austria had hinted that when Prussia was beaten, Italy would be rewarded for neutrality by the gift of Venetia, while Austria indemnified herself in Silesia. An act which would be shameful when assented to under "moral pressure" from other states would only be gracious in a great power flushed with victory.

Few persons, outside Berlin, doubted that in case of a duel Austria would have an easy victory over Prussia. Hampered by the interference of Italy, Austria might have more difficulty in settling matters to her liking; but if left free from apprehension in that direction, ^{all} they believed her triumph certain. No one in London at least contemplated a victory of Prussia single-handed over Austria, and if the question had lain between the two German powers alone, some members at least of the government might have been content to see them fight it out. Their greatest fear was that, if attacked on both sides, Austria, weakened as she was by financial difficulties, would be at a disadvantage, and a bloody and indecisive war would follow. Both sides would be exhausted, and when they paused for breath, France would intervene, and settle all the affairs of Europe to suit her own book. On the other hand, France might still intervene if Prussia were defeated, and then Austria would have to face three foes. ^{and} The result, they believed, would be the same: France was determined to make her own profit out of the affair, and she would give Venice to Italy, seize the Rhine frontier for herself, and would establish her own

influence firmly in South Germany, leaving both the great German powers exhausted and helpless. They regarded every proposal that emanated from France with the deepest suspicion, as being intended to further these schemes; even if it were ostensibly to preserve peace. Even the Roumanian Exchange Project, they feared, ^{might} ~~lest it~~ be used to entangle them gradually in the affair, and lure them on to threatening Austria with force if she did not consent to the plan. ~~The dread of this, as well as the "hands off Turkey" policy, probably contributed to their refusal.~~ 130.

It also induced them to look with profound distrust on the proposal for a European Congress, which France brought ^{forward} ~~before~~ them at the beginning of May.

The situation in Germany had now become much more acute. Bismarck was still pestering Austria with protests and complaints as to her conduct in Holstein, and he had brought forward the question of federal reform: a question in which the whole German Liberal party were absorbed, and which ~~(if settled in a progressive spirit)~~ must array Liberal opinion against non-German Austria. 131.
The Emperor of the French, therefore, proposed that the Congress should discuss the three questions which were threatening the peace of Europe---Venetia, the Elbe Duchies, and Federal Reform in Germany. Russia, France, and Britain, he suggested, should invite Prussia, Austria, and Italy to submit these question to the arbitration of Europe.

The first impulse of Great Britain was to refuse a Congress altogether; Clarendon replied, proposing to substitute a moral protest from Britain and France together against the conduct of the governments who were contemplating war. "Civil war in Germany, war in Italy, insurrection in the Turkish provinces, Russia without 132.

check or control occupying the Principalities, are disasters which may be near at hand, and which every practicable effort should be made to avert," said Clarendon. He then recited the objections to a Congress: it could not sanction the annexation of the Duchies by Prussia, he said. "With regard to the cession of Venetia, it is notorious, that Austria will not cede her Italian provinces unless she obtains territorial compensation elsewhere; but where is this to be obtained? Silesia is the only territory she would accept in exchange, but that she could only acquire by the sword...Negotiations upon the important points upon which peace depends would infallibly fail in a Congress which would be powerless to enforce them... But it does not follow that two Powers like England and France, peaceful and prosperous at home, should remain passive spectators of a bloody strife in which they may ultimately become involved, and which will at once inflict serious evils upon their subjects...H.M. Government would suggest that England and France... should make a solemn appeal to the honour, the Christian feeling, and the true interests of the three Powers, should call upon them to resume the status quo, and declare that the Power which persisted, without sufficient cause, in provoking an unjustifiable war must in the eyes not only of England and France but of the whole civilised world, be held responsible for all the calamities which it will cause." 133. 134.

"I regret..." Cowley replied, "that M. Drouyn de Lhuys does not seem at all disposed to adopt Your Lordship's suggestion that England and France should make a solemn appeal to the Powers now in arms to resume the status quo. M. Drouyn de Lhuys argues that

F.O. France, 1604. Clarendon To Cowley 2 May 1866. ✓

the position of England and France in a matter of this kind is 135.
essentially different," ^{The Frenchman added that} and he did not wish to repeat his experience in regard to Poland in 1863. (61) (11)

Clarendon, in his reply, was reproachful. "H.M. Government would not have ventured to offer such a suggestion if they had not been convinced that the Imperial Government were, equally with themselves, earnest and sincere in their desire to maintain peace. They felt that there would have been glory even in the attempt to secure such an inestimable blessing while there was some reason to expect that it might be successful, when supported by the moral influence of England and France united for the purpose. Certainly no dishonour could, in the opinion of H.M. Government, have attended the failure of an endeavour to prevent the commencement of a deadly strife which is without cause or justification, but which may ultimately involve the greater part of Europe in its vortex and inflict ruin and misery upon millions of people." One seems to trace the hand of Russell in this composition. (62) (12)

The Government, however, now consented to a Congress, though reluctantly. Their chief dread seems to have been that France would drag them into a war, pledging them to enforce the decision of the Congress, by arms, against a recalcitrant Austria, or perhaps Prussia---they really did not know which, but they were sure France was up to some mischief. "Your duty," Cowley was instructed, "will chiefly be to hear the proposals of the French minister and endeavour to elicit, in as clear and precise a form as possible, what are the real motives and objects of the French government in inviting the assembly of a congress ... The importance

(11) F.O. France, 1616.
Only to Clarendon 4 May 1866.

(62) F.O. France, 1604.

Clarendon to Cowley 7 May 1866.

cannot be exaggerated of leaving no doubt in M. Drouyn de Lhuys' mind of the anxiety of H.M. Government not to enter, even by implication, into any engagements which we should be unwilling or unable to fulfil. "Although it would be wise and prudent in Austria to consent to the transfer of Venetia to Italy, compensation being given to her... H.M. Government might be willing to give advice in that sense to Austria--- but should that advice be rejected, they would be bound no further---they could not undertake to be parties to any coercion." What, for example, was to be offered to Austria as compensation? Drouyn de Lhuys, who naturally did not see much use of holding a Congress if all the details were to be settled beforehand, answered impatiently that he supposed someone would get up and suggest something, or Austria herself would say what she would consent to accept. Cowley's later reports calmed the home government a little, and the Congress was *definitely* accepted. 139.

What part France would play in the coming struggle was certainly a problem that was exercising the minds of diplomatists all over Europe, but the British ~~government~~ ^{opinion} attached an exaggerated importance to the state of mind of Napoleon, and they believed that he was using his influence, not to prevent war, but to promote it.

"The truth is that the Emperor Napoleon fostered the war when he might by a word have prevented it," wrote Lord Augustus Loftus. 140.

Clarendon to Cowley 12 May 1866.
 F.O. France, 1606. "H.M. Government had arrived at no fixed opinion which would have admitted of their at once assenting to the proposition that the geographical position of Prussia was not well defined, or that it was desirable to secure for that power greater strength in the North of Europe. Neither were they prepared to say that the national independence of Italy required as an indispensable condition for its security that Venetia should be ceded to her".
 F.O. Prussia, 597. Loftus to Clarendon 18 August 1866. F.O. Prussia, 599. 141.

"If he" (Napoleon) "had said in good earnest, that any attempt on its part" (Prussia) "to extend its territorial possessions would compel him to seek compensation for France in the rectification of her Frontier on the Rhine, it is to be believed that even the bold minister who directs the royal council at Berlin would not have dared to engage his country in an aggressive war in which he would have the greater part of Germany as his immediate opponents in the East, and the immense military power of France threatening him on the West..... Viewed in this light the peaceful attitude of France and her determination to observe strict neutrality simply mean that when the contending parties shall have exhausted their forces in a prolonged and terrible struggle, France will step in and take the prey that will probably fall to her with little expenditure of men or money, and if the result of the present ambitious obstinacy of Prussia should be that she ruins her great industrial prosperity for years and has to cede the Rhenish provinces to France, instead of the hegemony of Germany she will have won its execration, and history will record that she well deserved the retribution which has been brought on her by her aggressive and unscrupulous policy." So wrote the British envoy at Dresden. (65)

"I asked the Prince" (Metternich) "whether he was equally convinced that the French Government would not see, to say the least, with complacency, a complete rupture between the two great German Powers, and I think that his Highness' opinion coincides with mine on this point, that the commencement of hostilities will not overwhelm the French Government with concern." So

Cowley reported. (66)

F.O. Saxony. 12. 9. 8. 66. *Stuart to F.O.*
 F.O. France. 15. 6. 66. *Cowley 7. 3. 66.*

A little later he wrote: "As it will possibly be in his" (Napoleon) "power to terminate the war, should it break out, when and on what terms he may please, it cannot be a matter of surprise, however much it may be subject of regret, that he will not intervene to prevent a war, which will make him so powerful..... He foresees in a great German war possible advantages to France. It would be well could the contending **Parties** be induced to reflect upon this, ere it be too late." ⁽⁶⁷⁾ ~~it~~ might acquire, but it

When war had actually begun, he wrote again: "I think... the 144. Emperor is sincere in his desire to preserve France from the calamities of war, and in fact, when Germany shall have exhausted both her finances and her armies in the struggle.... it will hardly be necessary for France to go to war in order to put a stop to the conflict. In my humble opinion the Emperor will permit neither of the great German Powers to obtain such an ascendancy as will place the other at its mercy---His object will be so to order peace, as to leave them as far as possible on an equality, and keep them checks on each other." ⁽⁶⁸⁾

Foreign powers were quite aware of the nervous tension reigning in London, and all who desired to obtain anything from Great Britain played upon her fears without scruple. They had long done so, for the national distrust of France was well understood.

(67) F.O. France. 1615. Cowley 12 April 1866. ~~1615~~ ✓

(68) Cowley to F.O. 18 June 1866, F.O. France, 1619.

Bismarck was quite ready to let it be understood that he had made his bargain with France and bought her support. ~~He did not imply that Belgium was in danger--that was the one thing that might induce Britain to fight--~~ but merely that compensation was arranged for Rhinewards, and that whoever opposed Prussia's designs might count on finding France behind her. Bernhardt^{he hunted} told Elliot, when he visited Italy, that "no compensation would be demanded from Prussia itself for any extension it might acquire, but it was by no means impossible that France might claim a counterpoise in other quarters. It was understood, he said, that England would not remain indifferent to the annexation of Belgium to France, and the Emperor would not attempt to carry it out, but the case was different as regards the coal and iron districts of that country, where the population were not averse to an annexation which would be viewed by Great Britain in a very different light from that of Antwerp and the mouths of the Scheldt. Of the existence of a project of this nature M. Bernhardt appeared to have little doubt, and to look upon it with manifest satisfaction." (68.)

146.

147.

Italy, as has already been shown, tried to get British support for her designs on Venetia by promising that when once that province was in her grasp, she would break off her intimate relations with France and attach herself to England. In Elliot's despatch, already quoted, conveying the request of Italy that Britain would support the Roumanian project, we find this statement of the sentiments of the Italian government: "The concurrence of H.M. Govern-

148.

(68) Elliot to F.O. 1. March 1866, F.O. Italy, 83.

See also the Sonne, 14 April 1866, F.O. Italy, 86.

ment is especially counted upon, not only for their well-known sympathy for Italy, but because the interests of Great Britain are so directly engaged in seeing this country take that really independent position which it ought to hold among the nations of Europe. --- Subserviency to France, which, in a greater or less degree has been shown by every successive administration, although daily becoming more distasteful and galling to the Italians, cannot be expected to disappear as long as the Venetian Question remains unsettled."

Austria, on her part, was hoping for the support of Great Britain in the coming struggle, and played on the British fear of France by accusing that country of designs on Belgium, and hinting at the danger of a Triple Alliance against herself, of France, Prussia, and Italy. Before Gastein, Mensdorff asked Bloomfield, "What H.M. Government would do, if a rupture took place. --- I replied that I had no doubt H.M. Government would see no sufficient reason for departing from a policy of neutrality, --- whereupon he said, suppose the Rhine or Belgium were threatened, England must move?" Later, "England, he said, might desire such an arrangement in the Italian Peninsula, but he believed it was doubtful if France sincerely wished it, and he felt certain that if Victor Immanuel thought to extend his power too far, the Emperor Napoleon would secure an equivalent and would also take up a position that would leave Italy his vassal. If Austria could place the least reliance on the Emperor Napoleon, something might be thought of to conciliate his views and those of other countries, but his word was good for nothing as was plainly proved in 1859.... Count Mensdorff went on to say that France thought to make vassals of all the

~~1861. 11th Nov. 1866, T.O. Italy, 22.~~ (69) Bloomfield to F.O. 3 August 1865
F.O. Austria 1865.

Powers of Europe; Austria would not submit to such a degradation, and 151.
 had therefore resolved to take up her position and defend herself
 against spoliation. The object of the Emperor Napoleon, he observed,
 was to gratify his ambition by breaking all treaties that interfered
 with his views... If Europe chose no longer to be bound by engagements,
 and the strongest were to rule and to dictate to the weakest, Austria
 must rely on her own strength, and see in the general confusion that
 must result from the ambitious projects of some Powers, whether she
 would be a loser or not."

As for Russia, Gortschakov ~~did not make~~ ^{no} attempt to calm the 152.
 alarms of the British government. He had for a considerable time
 past frequently expressed apprehensions of France turning the German
 quarrel to her own advantage. Russia, he said, was not at all con-
 cerned in the Austro-Prussian feud: "The dangerous part of the
 question lies in another direction:---other Governments may be
 drawn into the mêlée; France, for instance, cannot be expected to
 remain quiet when powder is being burnt so near her, and although
 it is impossible to say which side she would take it would be that
 which she considered most conducive to her own interests; nor is 153.
 it easy to imagine that England would look on quietly if Antwerp
 were converted into a French port of war." "His Excellency"
 (Gortschakov) "said his reports from Vienna gave him reason to
 fear that the demands of Prussia might lead to a rupture... and
 induce Prussia to seek the alliance and support of France, and he
 presumed that such an eventuality would be considered by H.M. Govern-
 ment as it would by that of Russia, to be fraught with danger to
 the general interests of Europe". (70.)

It may be a matter of surprise, that, with these fears tormenting
 (70) Buchanan to F.O., 11 August 1865, F.O. Russia, 681.

them, the government did not snatch at every hope of preventing war, and eagerly accept the Peace Congress as a sign of grace on the part of Napoleon. As has already been stated, however, they feared that he would so manage the Congress as to obtain all that he wanted for himself and Prussia and Italy, without actually going to war; and on the other hand, they were now actually considering the possibility of themselves entering the war, if it came, on the side of Austria, and for both these reasons they hesitated to accept at first.

~~Before going further with the history of the negotiations for a Congress, let us see how far these fears of France were justified.~~

15496 words

172 19

IV.

The policy of France, during the years 1865-6, is complicated and difficult to estimate. In the first place there are always two threads to follow---the official policy pursued by Drouyn de Lhuys as Imperial minister; and the secret, and frequently contradictory policy which was prosecuted at the same time by the Emperor, partly or wholly without the knowledge of his ministers. In the second place, the Emperor himself had not decided on any definite policy: his head was full of plans, now one of which, now another, ruled his vagrant fancy: and so both the public official policy, and the secret "underhand" policy, were doubtful, contradictory, liable to change at any moment. Generally, Drouyn de Lhuys was trying to follow out one line of action, while the Emperor was in private making all sort of tentative efforts here and there, and often embarking, on his own initiative, on new projects which counteracted the policy first determined on. After a time Drouyn de Lhuys would discover that his efforts were undermined by his master's mole-like burrowings, and would make a desperate cast back to pick up the threads and to preserve some appearance of consistency for his government.

2. The course pursued by France in 1863-4 had been neither wise nor sincere. Piqued and wounded by the conduct of Great Britain,

It is difficult to decide how far Napoleon's policy was communicated to his ministers. Benedetti denies having ever received from him secret instructions or private correspondence (Benedetti Chap. 4.). Yet it seems certain that the ministers were not always aware in what direction the Emperor was facing, or how far in this direction he intended to go.

the government had ~~taken a line which in~~ happier circumstances they would have seen was not the best or wisest. ~~for France.~~ Napoleon now began to see his mistake, and consider what position he would take up with regard to the emergence of the new Prussian power, which the conduct of Great Britain and France had allowed to develope. until now, the clearest rule ~~that~~ ~~dir-~~ ected his conduct of foreign affairs had been, the preservation of a good understanding with Britain, and the support of the idea of Nationalism. As to the British alliance he was disillusioned. His efforts to win the confidence of that state seemed vain, and a coldness had fallen between them. On the other hand, if Nationalism was to lead to the growth of a huge United Germany, it was leading him onto dangerous ground. Such a growth was bound to disturb the European balance abroad, and at home to lead to alarm and disturbance in France, to whom the advent of a very strong new power as her immediate neighbour would not be welcome. How should he deal with this rising star? Should he hold to his old nationalist policy, and give his blessing to New Germany? Should he accept the new state, offer a friendly hand, and at the same time try to strengthen his own Empire so that it might not be overshadowed? Could he possibly make Germany the ally of France, instead of Britain, who had deserted her?

There were difficulties here. Was it possible to obtain an increase of power for France---which he ^{generally} ~~could only~~ conceived as an increase of territory---without infringing the principle of nationality? He did not want to break with Britain altogether, by annexing Belgium, but, excluding Belgium, there was only Germany to choose from. Luxembourg, to be sure, was largely French in

spirit at least, but Luxembourg was not very big; to obtain the frontier of the Rhine for France he must incorporate districts chiefly German in race and language. Since he must go contrary to Nationalism, why not throw the idea overboard altogether, and identify himself with the fears of France, opposing with all his strength the progress of Germany?

His health and his intellect were already failing, and he had always been excitable, fickle, and easily carried away by romantic ideas. He could not now come to any decision. He could neither be sure what was the real strength and spirit of Germany, nor what was the dominant current of French opinion with regard to German unity. He had become anxious about his own position, and could not tell how far he would have the support of the nation in either policy. The loss of the British alliance had left him isolated in Europe. He knew not where to turn, and as he became weaker and more melancholy his moods were at the mercy of the stronger wills among his councillors and friends. He entered, hesitating, on a course of double-dealing and chicane which was in the end to lead himself and France to ruin.

(In face of the quarrel of the German Powers) There were four possible policies for France to adopt:

She might try to make a bargain with Prussia, guaranteeing to sanction and support all the annexations made by that country in return for an alteration of the French frontiers on the Rhine. There were ~~several~~ objections to this policy.

The first, which was conclusive, was that Bismarck would never carry out such a bargain: but Napoleon did not know this.

The second objection he could perceive, and ~~that~~ ^{it} was that, even in return for compensation for France, it might be dangerous to allow Prussia to extend her influence in Germany too far, and Austria to be too completely crushed.

She might make a bargain with Austria, again getting the Rhine for herself, Venice for Italy, Silesia for Austria. The objections to this plan were, firstly, that it might make Austria too strong by completely crushing Prussia, and secondly that in this case, to obtain the Rhine, France would probably have to go to war, whereas by the first plan she might obtain it for her moral support ~~of~~ Prussia: and Napoleon did not want another war.

France might remain neutral, bargain with neither state, allow ~~the powers~~ ^{them} to fight it out, and when both were exhausted, step in, and settle matters as she pleased. The objections to this plan were that France might make herself detested by both parties; that other powers, Britain or Russia, might interfere; that /

that Italy might be defeated and permanently injured before France could interfere to save her (but this might be avoided by letting Austria know beforehand that if she invaded Lombardy she would have to fight France as well as Italy). The last objection was, that when Napoleon was in a virtuous mood he felt the immorality of this policy — the encouragement of a bloody ~~war~~ war for his own profit. 10

The fourth policy was to make a serious effort to prevent the war. As Prussia was the power which wanted war, this policy involved a complete break with Prussia. It would require, to make it successful, that Austria should cede Venetia to Italy, and that France should then whole-heartedly support Austria against Prussia, and let Prussia know it. ~~(Such a policy would have far~~
~~was chance of success if undertaken in co-operation with Britain.)~~ 11.

The objections to it were, first and foremost, that Austria did not want to cede Venetia, and that it would be very difficult to induce her to do so; and next, that Britain was not ready to support France in this policy, and without her support its difficulties would be greatly increased. The only thing that would deter Prussia from attacking Austria would be that she understood that France would fight on Austria's side. Now if France made this threat, Britain, in her present state of nervous terror about Belgium and the Rhine, might take up an attitude hostile to France, and a desperately dangerous situation might arise. 12.

Besides /

Besides, so long as Britain would not seriously urge Austria to cede Venetia, Austria would be encouraged to refuse her consent to this, for she was at present receiving the warmest and most sympathetic declarations from Lord Clarendon. (72) ~~(11)~~

Napoleon could not make up his mind to ~~adopt~~ any of these policies definitely, and to give up the others. In his most Machiavellian mood, he leaned to No. 1; when his conscience was in the ascendant, he preferred No. 4; it was in accordance with the best traditions of his reign, and if followed successfully it would recall the old proud days of the British alliance and the liberation of Italy. There were also moments, however, when nos. 2 and 3 held attractions for him. Finally he made the fatal mistake of trying to combine all four plans, leaving open a loophole of escape from each. 13

Drouyn de Lhuys preferred Policy No. 4, or, if this were unattainable, No. 2. No. 1 was abhorrent to him, for, like a considerable number of his fellow-countrymen, he could not contemplate a Prussian Germany without uneasiness; and the bribe of the Rhine would have seemed a paltry compensation for being the accomplice of Bismarck, for it would displease and alienate the other neighbours of France. The Rhine frontier was in reality little more than a bright dream in France; the French people were practical enough to know that such an acquisition would only expose France to the jealousy and enmity of her neighbours. The wish of Drouyn de Lhuys, therefore, was to support Austria against Prussia, either by war or by peaceful negotiation, and 14

(72)

See below p. 81.

p 329

satisfy Italy by getting Venetia for her. Throughout 1865, and until war broke out, Drouyn de Lhuys was trying to carry out this policy, hindered and betrayed by the Emperor, who could not make up his mind to follow it consistently.

To see how Napoleon attempted to combine the four policies, we must return to the autumn of 1865, after the Convention of Gastein, and when Bismarck made his visit to Biarritz. While in France he interviewed both Napoleon and his ministers. Drouyn de Lhuys assured Cowley that ~~no~~ importance attached to this visit, and that the political situation had only been discussed in the most general terms. It is hardly possible that the French minister was speaking the truth; on the other hand, it seems probable that he was not aware how deeply his master had committed himself: for in these interviews Napoleon laid the foundation for Policy No. 1, promising neutrality in case of an Austro-Prussian war in return for compensation, the nature of which was not precisely specified. Napoleon, imagining that he was displaying the highest qualities of statesmanship, preferred to leave it in the air and not tie himself down to any definite agreement. This was all that Bismarck could desire. The ministers, apparently, were

(73.)
 Apparently no definite proposals for the form of the compensation were discussed until Bismarck opened the subject to Benedetti in Berlin, about a fortnight before war was declared. He may have received some private hints about the Rhine from Napoleon; at any rate he said to Benedetti that the French compensation "devraient être prise partout où on parle français sur sa frontière" — an allusion to Belgium, designs on which would of course involve a quarrel with Britain. He would rather resign, he said, than cede Cologne or Mainz, but might be induced to make some cession on the Haute Moselle, perhaps Trèves. Would this with Luxembourg suffice? Benedetti reminded him that Luxembourg was not No-Man's-Land like "Belgium and certain Swiss cantons", but kept the conversation purely theoretic, "ne voulant pas accepter la discussion sur ces eventualités, ni lui laisser supposer que ses combinaisons pouvaient avoir quelques chances d'être examinées à Paris, j'ai rompu l'entretien sur ce sujet, de manière de lui faire comprendre que je ne désirais pas le continuer." (Benedetti to Drouyn de Lhuys, 4. 11. 66. Particulière. Les Origines, No. 1630.)

not taken fully into the Emperor's confidence at the time, and only gradually learnt all that had taken place. 17.

Policy No. 1, according to Napoleon's belief, was quite consistent with No. 3. If Prussia won the war, he would, he thought, be sure of a nice tit-bit for France through his bargain with Bismarck. On the other hand, Prussia might not win, but (and he probably hoped for this) might exhaust herself in an indecisive struggle with Austria. In this case he would have saved himself from being placed in an awkward position, by having made no definite written agreement with Bismarck. Bismarck would have no hold on him, he fondly flattered himself, and he would be able 18. to intervene, as god from the car, between the two combatants, and perhaps obtain for himself more than Bismarck, victorious, would ever have conceded. Again, the fact that he had pledged himself to nothing would leave him free to bargain with Austria if he so wished, and connive at the destruction of Prussia, who might reproach him, but could bring no proof against him. 19.

Of course this would-be Machiavellian scheming played into Bismarck's hands. By trying to combine all four lines of action, Napoleon made each of them impossible. By coquetting with Prussia (Policy 1.) and ~~(permitting—at times even)~~ encouraging war 19 to break out (Policy 3), he roused deep suspicions of his own integrity in the mind of Austria, which made Policy 2 impossible, and of Great Britain, which made Policy 4 much more difficult. On the other hand, by trying

trying to leave the way open for a change of position, and refusing to commit himself to Prussia, he ruined his chances of obtaining any advantage from Policy I. For if Prussia were successful, Bismarck, since ^{nothing} ~~no agreement~~ had been signed, had only to repudiate his agreement with France altogether, and Napoleon would be left in the lurch. 20

Napoleon if he considered these disadvantages, probably thought he could fall back on Policy 3. But Policy 3 was the only one of the quartette which was not, and ^{could never be} ~~had never been~~, possible: it depended on Austria and Prussia being equally matched, and the combat ending in a draw. But Austria and Prussia were not equally matched, and if Austria were not supported by some other state, Prussia and Italy together would walk over her.

After ^{thus} making his bargain (after a fashion) with Bismarck, and ~~so~~ securing himself, as he believed, on that side, Napoleon began to grow doubtful and to lean towards Policies 2 & 4. Throughout the spring of 1866, he alternated between these two, and Policy 3, but gradually becoming more and more nervous about the success of No. 3, he inclined more and more towards espousing the cause of Austria. His efforts, therefore, to induce Austria to cede Venetia - the Roumanian Exchange Project, and the Conference - were in themselves perfectly sincere, and might without risk have been supported by Great Britain. Indeed it is probable that any external support would have ~~been~~ enough to induce Napoleon to determine on one definite line. ✓ 21

69

It was now that the skill of Bismarck's management ^{22.} became clear. He must stand or fall by the Italian Alliance. Napoleon, pursuing Policy 3, encouraged that Alliance, but once it was signed, he was helpless. His first attempt in accordance with Policy 4 to prevent the Alliance from being signed, to detach Italy from Prussia, and come to an agreement with Austria, had failed, as we have seen, owing to the refusal of Great Britain to support the Exchange Project. Napoleon, annoyed, then flung aside this idea for the time being, and went back to No. 3. He ~~aid what he could to encourage, even,~~ ^{even gave} ~~by giving up his attempts to win over Austria, and by practi-~~ ^{allowed - To understand} cally telling Italy that he approved of the Alliance being signed. ²³

This change of course caused Great Britain, and to some extent Austria, to believe that he had been insincere throughout, and that they had been wise in refusing his offer, since he was either pledged to Prussia or fighting only for his own hand. ^{24.}

~~This estimate was a wrong one.~~ ^{But this was a mistake.} If the Exchange Project had obtained any support from Britain Napoleon would ^{probably} have carried out his part of the plan loyally: Policy 4 offered more certain and less dangerous advantages than any of the others, and it was more in accordance with his own best feelings. ²⁴

~~In estimating Napoleon's policy during this time,~~
We must not forget that he had to face very real difficulties, even /

even if some of them were due to his own errors. His original mistake was the iniquitous bargain with Bismarck in 1865. ~~iniquitous even if he did not altogether mean to carry it out.~~ It produced the British and Austrian distrust that checkmated his first efforts on the other side. But he had also to reckon with the extreme stupidity, obstinacy and conceit of the Austrian government, ^{and} especially ^{of} Francis Joseph. (74) It was a giant's task to induce Austria to part with Venetia.

As soon as the Prusso-Italian Alliance was signed, Napoleon became sensible of its disadvantages, and went back again to his efforts to save Austria in spite of herself. It is quite possible that even while encouraging the signing of the Alliance, he may not have abandoned this policy. He very probably thought that the Alliance would be useful to him, for it would show Austria how really dangerous her position was, and be another argument to induce her to buy off Italy. This was quite a reasonable conclusion to come to. Indeed, it did play an important part in bringing Austria to her senses. She finally consented to the cession of Venetia and placed the province in Napoleon's hands to be ceded to Italy in return for her neutrality.

It was now that the most critical and dangerous hour approached for Bismarck.

It /

Mensdorff would have consented to the cession sooner if the Emperor had not absolutely refused.

~~(It must be remembered that)~~ The question of Italy was a vital one for Napoleon. It was the one point upon which he remained constant in the midst of all his wavering. Italy was his child, in a sense, ^{and} That he was deeply concerned for the welfare of the state he had created is beyond a doubt. The influence of his wife, the pressure put upon him by the Roman Catholic party, compelled him to withhold Rome from Italy and to baulk her of her desires. He saw, it must have been with painful feelings, that he was growing to be detested in the country which he had so greatly benefited. He ~~desired~~, ^{wanted} with his whole strength, to compensate Italy and to restore his own good fame, by presenting her with Venice, to soothe her wounded pride for Rome. This ~~wish~~ gives ^(us) the key to his conduct in 1866. It was the one definite object of his shifting and uncertain policy.

Once let the war begin, with Italy upon the side of Prussia, and Napoleon's hands were tied. He could, if Italy and Prussia were defeated, intervene to save them. But if Austria were defeated, he could do nothing, for he could not fight for Austria without turning his arms against Italy, the one thing that he ^{would} ~~could~~ never do. The policy of encouraging the Prusso-Italian Alliance was therefore a desperately dangerous one for him. If a war followed, his only hope of playing a great and creditable part depended on Austria's being victorious. If, on the other hand, he merely considered the Alliance /

Alliance as a means of frightening Austria into accepting his proposals, he should have stopped to consider the character of the Italian government.

The whole success of Napoleon's policy, the whole success of Bismarck's policy, now hung upon the decision of the Italian government. The Treaty was signed: and Austria had given up Venetia. If Italy decided to break the Treaty, and take Venetia, Napoleon had won: if she decided to hold by the Treaty and reject the ~~offer~~ ^{cession}, Bismarck had won.

Venetia as a free gift, or Venetia as the possible prize of a bloody, doubtful and expensive war: and only a secret agreement to weigh in the balance! Napoleon did not doubt the result.

Bismarck knew his man better. He could rely upon la Marmora.

It was at the very end of April that the chancelleries suddenly found themselves talking about a Congress, at first in a very tentative fashion. ^{Napoleon's} The secret negotiations with Austria were then just nearing success. A few days later ~~it~~ ^{this} was attained, and on May 5th Nigra wired the offer to Florence. Napoleon held Venetia for Italy, if Italy would give Austria a free hand to compensate herself in ^{Germany} ~~Prussia~~ in case of victory. It is probable that the Cabinet of Florence was at this time the only one in Europe which had at its head a perfectly simple, unaffected, direct and honourable gentleman. La Marmora was a soldier and a patriot, a sensible and moderate politician:

he was also under the belief that as Prime Minister of a great power he was as much under obligation to keep his promised word as he was as a private gentleman. "Ma première impression", he telegraphed back to Nigra, "est que c'est un question d'honneur et de loyauté de ne pas nous dégager avec la Prusse..". But he was full of the deepest regret that so fair an offer could not be accepted. One chance still offered. The Treaty of Alliance with Prussia only lasted 3 months: if within that time war had not been declared the Treaty expired. If war could be postponed for some two months longer, Italy would be free to accept. "Mais, comme le traité expire le 8 Juillet, on pourrait arranger la chose avec la Congrès", he suggested, and he begged Nigra for news about the Congress, which, he emphasized, offered the one possible chance of a peaceful solution.

The next day Nigra again transmitted the offer with concessions. This time, Venetia was to be ceded for a simple promise of neutrality, the threat to Prussia being omitted. La Marmora again reluctantly refused *this also*.

When it is remembered that Prussia had six months previously brought Italy almost to the point of alliance and abandoned her at Gastein: that she had done her best to entrap Italy in signing the present alliance on very disadvantageous terms: that La Marmora doubted Bismarck's loyalty, and that at this very moment the Prussian legation in Florence was /

La Marmora "Un Peu de Lumière" *quoted in Origines*

was ceaselessly pouring out a stream of abuse against La Marmora in terms unheard of in diplomatic circles, ^{(76-) ~~(11)~~} it will be seen 34. how dangerously Bismarck was venturing, and how securely he counted on the character of the Italian Minister.

Finding that Italy could not be induced to throw her ally overboard, Napoleon eagerly seized the alternative offered by La Marmora, and pressed on the idea of a Congress. "J'ai vu l'Empereur aujourd'hui, ^{as said Nigra,} ~~il~~ ^{il} convient que la situation est très délicate. Il m'a dit que, pour gagner du temps, il fera son possible pour remettre sur le tapis l'idée du Congrès". ⁽²⁷⁷⁾ The British Government little knew how strained was the situation, when they discouraged the plan for a Congress, owing to suspicions 35. of Napoleon's motives, and later accepted it with so much reluctance.

A preliminary discussion of the terms on which the Congress was to be summoned between herself, Britain, and Russia, was proposed by France, and again somewhat doubtfully accepted by Britain. Russia accepted the Congress, but caused some delay by declaring herself strenuously opposed to any cession of Venetia, so that in deference to her feelings the expression used in the invitation of the three powers had to be altered to the vague term "différend Italien", so as not to compromise Gortschakov. Russia was indeed loyally playing Prussia's game. 36.

(76) See F.O. papers,
 (1) Elliot's correspondence for 1866-7-8, has many references to the Prussian hatred for La Marmora. F.O. Italy.
 (2) Nigra to La Marmora. "Un Peu de Lumière".
 (3) La Marmora: Un Peu de Lumière.

Bismarck's plans were ~~again~~ in danger, perhaps more than ever before. A Conference would have ruined him. Even if it had broken up without success, it only needed that it should drag on until the beginning of July, and Italy would be set free to make an arrangement with Austria. If it did meet, however, it was more likely that some settlement would be made, equally fatal to his policy. Napoleon's idea was: Venice for Italy; part of Silesia for Austria; the duchies, and some small North German states, for Prussia; and possibly a small "Confederation of the Rhine," part of the German Confederation, but under French protection, for France. ^{Most of these points} ~~As to the first three clauses,~~ they were so apparently reasonable that it would be difficult to reject them in a Conference: yet Bismarck might as well have abdicated his position and called in the Liberals at once. For him, for the New Germany, it was suicide. Perhaps he counted on the possible suggestion of a Rhenish confederation to rouse opposition to France in the Conference, and so give him a chance to continue his game. More probably he relied on his lucky star, and hoped that something would intervene to prevent the Conference. At any rate, he dared not refuse, and so put himself in the wrong in the eyes of Europe. He reluctantly accepted.

Benedetti reported that the King would be glad to accept a Conference; Bismarck would not, for he ~~knew it will~~ ruin his plans, but he ~~will~~ not dare to refuse, though he will do nothing to help towards success. He knows he will get the duchies, but at the cost of ² certain sacrifices. ²² Both he and the King hold that it is dangerous that the situation as it is should be prolonged, as that will tell against Prussia, who is now ready.

for war, and this will give Bismarck a hold over the King. ^(78.) ~~127~~

Later Benedetti reported that Bismarck had spoken to him very strongly of his unwillingness for a Conference. Benedetti warned his government that he could not guarantee that in spite of all their efforts some chance incident would not give rise to war before the Conference met--(prématurément.) In any case Bismarck would try to force an immediate decision at Paris. Britain ~~had~~ ^(79.) Russia had put pressure on him to accept.

Bismarck for a moment feared the Emperor was going to break away from the toils in which he was involved, and take up an honest and sincere policy. He sent a special envoy, de Burg, to Paris, to secure a preliminary arrangement before the Conference met, but met with no success. ^(80.) ~~127~~

His luck did not fail him, however. After a time of uncertainty, Austria wrote that she could not enter the Conference unless all the participating powers were pledged not to accept any territorial aggrandisement. Both France and Britain pressed her/

^(78.) ~~127~~ Despatch of 29. ^{May} 66. Benedetti, p. 125.

^(79.) ~~127~~ Private letter of 1. ^{June} 66, Benedetti, p. 130.

^(80.) ~~127~~ Bismarck to Benedetti, 19. ^{May} 66, private, Benedetti Chap. lv.

her to withdraw this reply, saying it constituted a refusal as it implied that Venetia could not be given up: "as she would not do so, Italy ~~accepted it as such~~, and the Conference ~~had to be~~ abandoned. Bismarck, when the news arrived, leapt to his feet crying, "Long live the King!"

Henceforward events moved rapidly towards war.

The refusal of Austria is the more astonishing as we know she had already consented in secret to the cession. Apparently Francis Joseph felt it dishonourable to do at the bidding of a Congress what he had consented to do as an individual act. Perhaps, also, Austria believed that the Congress would award her a less compensation than what she hoped to conquer for herself by arms; for at the same time Austria privately informed France that the secret offer of Venetia would still hold good. In connection with Austria's refusal, however, a curious incident occurred, which must be mentioned here. Russia, one of the three powers which issued the invitation to the Congress, used her influence to induce Austria to refuse that invitation. We know that Gortschakoff encouraged Austria in her course, ^{though} but we cannot tell how far he went in his encouragement. ^{but it is certain} We know also, however, that he told Austria that Great Britain ~~also~~ would support her in her refusal.

On May ^{10th} ~~10th~~, discussing the possibility of a Congress

with Sir Andrew Buchanan, Gortschakoff had said to the British Ambassador /

Ambassador that "the Russian Government agree in principle to the conditions which Her Majesty's Government attach to their assent to the Convocation of a Congress, and that they cannot accept as a basis for such a meeting the cession of Venetia to Italy even subject to a compensation to Austria. - While therefore they concur in the opinions expressed in the French proposal respecting the Elbe Duchies and Federal Reform --- they consider that the Cabinet of Paris if really desirous for the convocation of a Congress should abandon a basis for its deliberations which would be declined by England, Russia and Austria and render such a meeting impossible". Gortschakov received no definite reply from Sir Andrew Buchanan, and on the same date the Russian Minister said to Baron Talleyrand, that Lord Clarendon was firmly resolved not to enter a Congress except on these conditions: 1. No cession of Venetia: 11. No annexation of the Duchies to Prussia; 111. No increase of influence to Prussia by Federal Reform; iv. No dismemberment of Turkey. "Les informations du Baron de Budberg" (Russian Ambassador at London) "sont très précises", writes Talleyrand. Russia, he says, agreed with these principles, and will fight rather than permit that the Exchange Project be carried out. Gortschakov had said to him: "Croyez-moi, mettre en avant la cession de la Vénétie est fermer les portes du Congrès avant de les avoir ouvertes",... because three Powers at least --- Russia, Austria, England --- will refuse to discuss on this basis. Gortschakov backed these statements by showing Talleyrand despatches from Brunnow, in which Clarendon's views were clearly set forth. (82)

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This information, combined with the extreme reluctance at first shown by the British Government and the coldness of Lord Cowley, gave alarm to ^{France,} ~~the French Government,~~ ^{and} ~~who wrote to~~ ^{was asked} La Tour, demanding what truth there was in the allegations of Russia. La Tour evidently found the incident inexplicable. He wrote back that Brunnow must have attributed too much importance to some words of Lord Clarendon sympathetic to Austria; but added, that Clarendon, though still believing the cession of Venetia the only way to prevent war, is not now quite so decided about it as one could wish. (83)

In the meantime, the British Government seems to have had no idea of what was in Gortschakov's mind, and Buchanan seems to have regarded the Prince's references to Britain as merely one of the spiteful hits which were frequent between these two diplomats, who never met without squabbling. Buchanan was therefore startled when on May 21st Gortschakoff told him that he had informed Austria that in refusing to cede Venetia, she would have the moral support of Russia and of "England", as they would not press her to accept conditions against her will. (84)

Buchanan then expressed the hope of his government that Russia had not really made any such statement to Austria, and Gortschakov replied that he had certainly done so:

"as he said his reports from England led him to believe that H. M. Government looked unfavourably on the proposal for the cession of Venetia to Italy against territorial compensation". (84)

Origines 2361. 16. 566. (84) (F.O. Russia. 698) Buchanan to F.O. 21. May '66.

This statement about British views was then contradicted by the British Government.

Not possessing the despatches of Brunnow and Gortschakov, nor any account from Clarendon of the interview or interviews in question, it is difficult to decide how the mistake arose. That there was a mistake is certain. Britain, we have shown, was anxious that Italy should acquire Venetia, and had several times advised Austria to give up the province. It is not easy to believe that Gortschakov could ever have really thought that Britain would support Austria in refusing to cede Venetia. 29

There were, however, several things which gave colour to Gortschakov's statement, and which must have made it appear to Austria perfectly convincing, when made by him in such an emphatic manner.

Firstly, Britain had declared herself strongly opposed to the compensation of Austria in the Danubian Principalities: this could easily be exaggerated and made to appear specially significant.

Secondly, Great Britain had shown herself extremely doubtful and reluctant about the proposal for a Congress. It was well understood by everyone that the British government were deeply suspicious of the motives of France, in suggesting the Congress, and that she had accepted in the end, not because she had much hope of a satisfactory settlement, but because she could not, in accordance with her declared principles, refuse to support any proposal that, ostensibly at least, made for peace. Buchanan had expressed this clearly to Gortschakov. During the negotiations 50

about the invitations to the Congress Buchanan had protested that Gortschakov's wish to substitute the expression "différend Italien", for "cession de Vénétie", would cause delay in the invitation being sent. Gortschakov replied that: "Though such an apprehension might influence H.M. Government, in consequence of the great⁵¹ financial interests in Great Britain which might suffer from the war, he was not similarly circumstanced, and he therefore felt that the probability of improving the terms of the invitation so as to render them more acceptable to Austria, counter-balanced any risk of war which could be incurred by delay. I rejoined that he ought however to consider there were more serious consequences attached to the responsibility of which I spoke, than the mere blame which might attend it, as no one could say what would be the policy of France if a war which she had ostensibly exerted⁵² herself to prevent, could be attributed to the manner in which her proposals had been received by the neutral Powers". (85) (11)

It was therefore easily to be understood that Britain did not attach much importance to the holding of a Congress.

In the third place, the strong feeling against Prussia of Clarendon, and of the Queen, and to some extent of Russell, was well known. Clarendon had told France, and possibly others, that he did not approve of authorising Prussia to seize the Duchies, and though he would not oppose it, he would do nothing to enforce⁵³ such a decision in the Congress. He had also made it quite clear to Austria that his sympathies were with her, and that he hoped she would defeat Prussia.

"I should only say," he had said to Apponyi, "that the advice of

(85) F.O. Russia, 698. Buchanan to F.O. 21 May 1866. ✓

been

of England having ~~unfortunately~~ disregarded two years ago, we had ceased to take concern in the Schleswig-Holstein Question, and remained passive spectators of the process by which Prussia was carrying out her intention to annex the Duchies.... I begged leave to express my opinion that the course which the Austrian Government was about to pursue in this critical position of affairs, and the determination of the Emperor not to yield to menace were calculated to sustain the dignity of Austria, and that at the same time that she would thereby be saved from the humiliation which she properly considered would be worse than war, it would tend to prevent war by gaining for her the public opinion of Europe which would be unanimous against the attempt of Prussia to take advantage of the temporary difficulties in which Austria found herself placed, in order to secure her territorial aggrandisement." He then placed the good offices of Great Britain at the disposal of Austria. "But we know from experience of how little avail such good offices were with the German Government if we acted singly and had not the support of other powers. If, contrary to every expectation founded on common sense, the dictates of humanity and the true interests of Germany, Prussia should push matters to extremities, the Austrian government, I said, was quite right in assuming that England would preserve a strict neutrality but that in desiring that we should address something in the nature of a threat to Prussia, the Austrian government sought to make us partizans in the war, and that I could hold out no expectation that after adopting a policy of neutrality we should depart from our duty as neutrals."

(86.)

F.O. Austria 701.

7.3.66.

match

(Italics mine)

It was small wonder if protests of neutrality coupled with such warm expressions of sympathy and approval encouraged Austria to hope for something more, especially when it was known that both the Queen and the Prince of Wales were in favour of a militant policy.

When Austria had suggested that she be indemnified for the loss of Venetia by the acquisition of the whole or part of Silesia, the British government had never expressed dissent or disapproval. They had only said that such compensation would have to be wrested from Prussia by force, and that Great Britain could not resort to the use of force herself, and deprecated violent measures from Austria. 57

Taking these facts into consideration, the attitude of Austria becomes quite clear, and the effect upon her of Gortschakov's assurances easy to understand.

Austria, like Britain, suspected the motives of France. She feared, like Britain, that the result of a Congress would only be to secure a diplomatic triumph for France. France, she thought, would use her influence to establish Prussia firmly in the North of Germany, restore her own influence on the Rhine and in South Germany, secure Venetia for Italy, and fling Austria as compensation some worthless scraps of territory---something in the Balkans, too small to annoy Russia, or at best a mere nibble of Silesia. Then, if Austria did not accept these terms, she would be accused of deliberately provoking a war. Besides all this, if the Congress met, and failed, Austria would be worse off than she was now. She could not, in her present financial straits, keep her armaments at their war standard all the while that the 58 59

Congress was sitting, and yet it would be dangerous to demobilise until peace was assured.

On the other hand, if Austria did not enter the Congress, but fought the quarrel out, she stood, so she thought, to gain much more. She had not been eager for war, but her anger and resentment were now thoroughly roused by the tactics of Bismarck, and she was beginning to be almost anxious to fight. Italy she did not fear: all her concessions to Italy were really offered to France, in order to secure French^v neutrality. If faced with Prussia alone, she hoped to be able to defeat that power, and to make large conquests in Silesia. She now hoped also that she had secured France, by handing over Venetia to Napoleon. ^{(87.) (H)} She had every reason to believe, from the utterances of Clarendon and Bloomfield, that public opinion in Great Britain would sanction all the annexations she proposed to make in Silesia. She knew she could count on the support of most of the South German states. Then, having vindicated her reputation and secured her position in Germany, she would willingly hand over her troublesome possessions --- Venetia to Italy, Holstein to Prussia. 60

Earnest pressure from Great Britain and France together would have forced Austria to accept the Congress. It was only because she believed that Britain did not attach much importance to the Congress that she dared refuse it. 61

So passed the last chance of peace.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ It was for this reason that in refusing the Congress she privately assured France that her offer of Venetia would stand.

Bismarck, relieved of his last fears, pushed on his preparations. The quarrel now passed into what we may call the Disarmament Phase---when each state protests its own peaceful intentions, but maintains that its neighbour's threatening armaments compel it to mobilise. Austria, however, ~~at once~~ consented to disarm, and even to begin the day before Prussia; but here again Bismarck found Italy useful, for the day after Prussian complaints ceased, those of Italy began, and the subject was revived. Bismarck was now relying on the Federal Reform Question to give the final signal for war. He had a card up his sleeve with which he could startle Germany and Europe.

In the meantime the question of war and peace was being debated in London.

In one respect the situation was essentially different from what it had been in 1864. The Queen was ardently in favour of war. ^{One} ~~Her~~ daughter was about to marry an Augustenburg princeling; ^{Another, her favourite, was married to} ~~her eldest daughter, and her favourite,~~ with her husband, the Crown Prince of Prussia, ^{and they were} ~~were~~ the most earnest opponents of Bismarck's policy, ~~(in Prussia)~~ That policy had shocked her own constitutional principles; she had always believed that Britain should give friendly support to Austria, and she and the Prince Consort had taken the Austrian side in 1859-60. On March 30th the Queen had sent a memorandum to Russell in favour of war with Prussia. Russell had refused to enter upon such a course: firstly, he said, because if Britain had intended to fight at all it should have been in defence of Denmark in 1864, and secondly, because, when Britain

had once acquiesced in the destruction of Denmark, "it remains for Germany, which invoked the war, and is strong enough to assist Austria to do right, to settle the Duchies in the manner conformable to the wishes of the inhabitants." ~~(88) (11)~~ This cryptic statement, if it means anything, appears to imply that the Diet was to get up and teach Bismarck his place.

The majority of the Cabinet, it appears, were against intervention. If Gladstone ever mentioned the subject in his letters or diaries, Lord Morley did not consider the references worth printing, ⁶⁵ as there is no mention of it in his "Life". Probably his opinion was, as usual, on the side of peace, and he was, besides, much more interested in the Reform crisis at home. Granville took up the same attitude as in 1864, though his position was rather weaker, as he had not now the support of the Queen. ~~(He was, however, equally determined to restrain Russell and Clarendon if they showed any disposition to commit themselves to a militant policy.)~~

During the negotiations for the Congress, Russell, for the time being at least, changed his mind. On May 17th, he wrote to Clarendon, proposing to offer Austria "moral, diplomatic, and if necessary ~~(89) (12)~~ military aid in her quarrel in Schleswig-Holstein," if Austria ⁶⁶ would consent to sell Venetia to Italy for £20,000,000 or £30,000,000. "This would be a course spirited, prudent, and honourable. Austria is wrong in Italy, right in Germany. We have lost some reputation because France refused to join us in a war for Denmark, the blame for which the Continent throws upon us, and not

68 upon France or Russia, who both hung back. We need not take any part in the reform of the German Confederation; but in this case too Austria is in the right, barring two or three concessions to Prussia, which she might easily make. In coming to an under- 67 standing with Austria I should endeavour to get back the Isle of Alsen and Flensburg for Denmark. In the hands of Prussia they form a menace against Denmark. ~~As to~~ As to Silesia, events must decide, not we." (90) (11)

At this moment we will not stop to examine the policy towards Germany outlined by Russell. We need only say 69 that as Italy had already refused Venetia as a free gift from France, she was not likely to accept it from Britain when she had to pay £30,000,000 for it. Had the government attempted to carry out this plan, they would have foundered on the same 68 rock as had Napoleon—the rock of La Marmora's loyalty to his engagements with Prussia. But the policy was never (adopted, never) sanctioned by the Cabinet: Granville would have strenuously opposed it, and In any case the Government soon became (almost completely) absorbed in the constitutional and parliamentary crisis at home.

70 In the meantime, Austria had had the idea of placing the Holstein question in the hands of the Diet, where she had a large majority on her side. Bismarck now played his master-card. The Prussian representative in the Diet proposed the election of a German parliament by universal suffrage to decide 69 the question of Federal Reform.

It /

It was a thunderclap. The Prince of Darkness had appeared in the guise of an angel of light. By Morier and his school the step was regarded as an evidence that Bismarck was politically bankrupt. His policy had broken down and he was making a desperate bid for the support of the Liberals. ⁷¹ He was known to have had interviews with the Liberal leaders. The general opinion was that he would fail in this: he would never be able to reconcile the Liberal opposition, who would be traitors to ~~their~~ cause if they accepted his olive branch. ⁷⁰

⁽⁹¹⁾ "Roggenbach" came on Bismarck's invitation, and I am not sure whether, on his arrival, he had not a secret hope of being able "to do some good". At any rate he went away perfectly désillusionné. He has told Bismarck the truth: that he may gain over some Liberal men and make renegades of ⁷² them, but that he could not gain over the Liberal party; that he was not the man to reorganise Germany by means of a ^{(92) (2)} Parliament . . ."

These critics made two mistakes. Firstly, they underestimated the lure that Universal Suffrage would have, when ⁷¹ combined with the éclat of a great Prussian victory in the field.

Secondly, they were wrong in believing that Bismarck had made any surrender of his old ideas. His Universal Suffrage proposal was a trap to catch a Liberal: but it was ^{only} ~~nothing but~~ a trap. It was not an offer at compromise; Bismarck

⁽⁹¹⁾ Leader of the Liberal party.
⁽⁹²⁾ ~~Stockmar~~ to Morier, Morier II, p. 62.

27
Bismarck did not intend to meet the Liberals half way, but thought he could entice them entirely into his own camp. He was far too clever to believe that in offering the bribe of Universal Suffrage he ran any risk of damaging his own or his master's position. No one, as yet, had seen Universal Suffrage in operation in Europe. It was regarded as a thoroughly democratic measure. No one as yet was aware, that whereas in a small community the operation of Universal Suffrage is democratic in nature, in a large community it is nothing of the kind. There is, however, every reason to believe that Bismarck had seen this, and that he knew very well what he was about when he offered it as bait to the Liberals. He saw that the control exercised over Parliament by an electorate where Universal Suffrage exists is necessarily very much slighter than that exercised by a more limited electorate. The wider electorate is unwieldy, chaotic, incapable (save in great crises, when the issue is simple) of united and disciplined action. The vote of the educated politically-minded classes is swamped in the vote of the ignorant masses who are easily managed and easily bribed by social reforms. He knew he could handle such an electorate.

He saw, also, that a parliament sent up by such an electorate would be comparatively helpless against the government.

Unless its control over the government was secured by the most rigid and comprehensive laws its influence was bound to lessen. Conventions, such as existed under the English

Constitution, were of little use; Conventions can be violated, however revered and hoary they be, without attracting much attention. And in Prussia there were not even conventions to secure the control of the legislative ^{will} over the executive. The King was still very nearly an autocrat. He had governed for years past without parliamentary sanctions and taxed without legal authority, and not all the protests of the Chambers could prevent this. Bismarck now wanted to reconcile the Liberal opposition at least in part and he saw that he could do so, ⁷⁵ without abandoning any of his own authority, partly by paying out the glittering token-money of Universal Suffrage---reforming the Electorate without reforming the Legislative ^{will}; and partly by winning their hearts and dazzling their imaginations with military and diplomatic triumphs. It was, of course, a dangerous policy. If he were defeated by Austria, he ^{was lost} and ^{perhaps} ~~probably~~ the Monarchy ^{too} ~~was lost~~: but Moltke and Roon had promised him victory; and with that in his hand, he knew that he could hypnotize the German people into believing that they were a free and democratic ~~state~~ ^{nation}.

^{To} In Austria the Universal Suffrage proposal was anathema; and the Governments of the Southern States detested it almost as deeply, for they feared a Parliament erected by such means would bring about their downfall. When, therefore, Austria brought forward in the Diet the proposal to mobilise the Federal forces against Prussia, on the ground

that her reform proposal violated the constitution of the Confederation and the Treaty of Vienna, it was passed almost unanimously. The Prussian representative then rose and announced that his Government withdrew from the Confederation, which thereby ceased to exist.

Two days later the Prussian[✓] armies invaded Saxony, 77. Hesse Cassel, and Hanover; and having thus secured the North, poured over the Austrian frontiers. On June 20th Italy declared war, and invaded Venetia.

While in London the Reform Bill crisis was passing through its last stages, the war was fought out in Bohemia on ^{and} her Lombard frontier. Italy, as was generally expected by 79. all but her own people, was immediately and somewhat disgracefully defeated at Custoza. But from the North queer rumours began gradually to filter. Confidence and excitement gave place to doubt and anxiety: [vague reports of movements and skirmishes in Bohemia filled the despatches. Next came a 78. few hours of dread and ominous silence: and then, heralded by rumours ever blacker and blacker, the news of Sadowa burst like a thunderclap on Europe. The war, barely begun, was already at an end. The Austrian power had softly and suddenly vanished away, at the first round of ~~the~~ Prussian ordnance. 76. "The needle-gun is King!" cried the Times. It was not a desperately-fought struggle, as had been the case in the Danish war, where the strongest was victorious by force of numbers: it was a shameful and instantaneous collapse. There was /

was no Austria: only the Prussian Kriegsherr, bestriding Germany like a colossus from the Main to the Baltic, stood supreme as the powder-smoke cleared away. 79

Napoleon, who, as ~~has been~~ seen, had for some weeks been relying chiefly on Policy 2, that of an understanding with Austria, now found his secret treaty so much waste paper.

81 Startled out of his wits by this sudden burst of "Kanonengebrüll und wiehernde Rosse Getrabe", he made a wild effort to revert to Policy 3, and on the day after Sadowa - the 4th of July - he telegraphed to King William that Austria had placed Venetia in his hands, and announced himself as mediator. 80

This double news created a sensation in London, the worst, it seemed, had come to pass, and all their fears would be realised.

"The war is as good as over," Clarendon wrote, on July 5th---his last day in office---"And everything plays into L.N.'s hands. He wants a great slice of land for himself as the reward for having abetted the quarrel. But," added the noble lord with a flash of insight, "Bismarck will only negotiate about that with a breech-loader in his hand." Things had come to a sad pass when Clarendon was driven to rely on Bismarck's pugnacity. 81

"La demarche d'Autriche," reported la Tour d'Auvergne, who appeared to have seen London through a fog couleur de rose, instead of its normal pease-porridge hue, "Qui fait de

(93)

81 Louis Napoleon.

l'Empereur l'arbitre de la situation de l'Europe, a causé ici une profonde sensation. La prestige de la France en est considérablement accru, et l'opinion publique, forcée de rendre hommage à la prévoyance comme à la haute sagesse de la politique de sa Majesté, voit dans l'intervention pacifique de l'Empereur, en même temps qu'un gage certain du rétablissement de la paix, une garantie efficace contre l'ambition de la Prusse... On comprend que la Prusse a acquis, dans une certaine mesure, le droit de se montrer exigeante; on est disposé à croire qu'elle ^{le} sera plus encore, peut-être, qu'elle ne serait fondée à l'être; mais on a peine à admettre qu'elle veuille, en fin de compte, s'exposer, en déclinant les conseils et les propositions de sa Majesté, à compromettre sa position vis-à-vis de la France." 94)

La Tour exaggerated the confidence placed in France's probability, but he probably did not exaggerate the high estimate current in London of the Emperor's dominating position. 95)

Whatever the opinion there; however, Napoleon himself was not long permitted to cherish any illusions. His position

94) 7 July 1866. Les Origines, No. 2909.

95.) Probably only one person was heartily pleased. The telegram announcing the Emperor's mediation arrived at Windsor during the marriage ceremony of the Princess Helena to Prince Christian of Slesvig-Holstein, and the Prince of Wales left his place to inform the French ambassador, and to express his happiness to see Napoleon "devenir ainsi l'arbitre de la situation." La Tour to D. de Lhuys, 5 July 1866. Les Origines, No. 2874.

was, in fact, ~~a~~ hopeless ~~one~~. He could only save himself from a shameful rebuff by enforcing his offer of mediation in arms; and that he ^{dared} could not do ~~(though Drouyn de Lhuys desired it)~~ for on the one hand, he could not face the prospect of a war with Italy, and on the other, he could not fight Italy and Prussia together with his army in the state of disorganisation, into which mismanagement and the Mexican Expedition had thrown it. Drouyn de Lhuys ^{might} would have taken the risk, but Napoleon 84 dared not face it when it came to the point, and he went through a week of doubt and change. His first decision, which had produced the unlucky telegram, had been to summon the Chambers, and fight if necessary. Drouyn de Lhuys sent such instructions to the Diplomatic agents. Next day his courage failed him, and he countermanded the order to summon the Chambers. On the 6th, he ^{telegraphed} wired to Britain and Russia begging them to support his mediation "par force". In the meantime he saw disaster closing about him.

He had taken no written bond from Prussia, and now 85 Bismarck repudiated the bargain altogether: Not a scrap of German ground, he said, and no mediation unless on Prussia's terms.

Italy, on her side was flung into a passion by the statement about Venetia. It was too much, indeed, to ask her, in order to salve Napoleon's wounded pride, to submit to such a humiliation. She, having suffered a complete defeat in a fair field, was now humbly to accept from Napoleon's hands the /

the Venetia she could not conquer for herself; and this too, when, Prussia having defeated Austria, the coast[✓] was clear for a triumphal entry into Venice! Italy refused to accept Venetia from France, and was doubtful about even consenting to an armistice. Napoleon, desperate, sent off Benedetti to plague Bismarck at Prussian Head Quarters. On the 13th of July, after a week of uncertainty, Bismarck presented his terms through Goltz. He would allow Napoleon to mediate, on these terms:---

86.

A new German Confederation was to be formed, including only the Northern states, but these were to be completely under the control of Prussia: Austria was to be entirely excluded[✓] from Germany: the South German states --- Bavaria, Baden, Württemberg, and the southern part of Hesse-Darmstadt---were[✓] to be left alone to form a Confederation of their own: Austria would cede Venetia to Italy, but otherwise be left intact. The large territorial annexations afterwards made by Prussia were not all mentioned in these terms, but Napoleon accepted them later, as he now accepted the first plan. He dared not cavil at Bismarck's word: and in his rôle of mediator he submitted Bismarck's terms to Prussia, Italy and Austria. It was now, and not at Sedan, that the pride of France touched its nadir.

87.

The[✓] peace terms were very much more lenient than anything which Europe had expected[✓] from Bismarck; it had been thought that he would demand the German provinces of Austria, and when

88.

it was known that no cession of territory would be demanded of that country save Venetia, public opinion in Great Britain, and else where, concluded that this moderation was due to the interference of France. They had still before them an imaginary picture of Napoleon, a lordly figure, ruling the tempest, and Bismarck gnashing his teeth in baffled greed. In truth, Bismarck^k had fought the most desperate battle of his^v life with King William and the military chiefs, to induce them to consent^v to these terms. He did not wish to destroy Austria, for he saw in her a future ally. He only wanted to drive her out of Germany, and leave the field clear for Prussia. Italy had been promised Venetia; but beyond that he had no desire to weaken Austria. 89.

By this time a Conservative government had taken the place of the Liberal administration in London, ^{and} it fell to their lot to decide what should be the policy of Great Britain in the new state of affairs abroad. ~~(In estimating the policy of the Liberal government, therefore, we have only to deal with the period before the war began, and during the first stage of the war.)~~

VI.

In 1866 Britain was not in such an advantageous position for intervention as she had been in 1864. The situation was now much more complicated. When Italy was drawn into the struggle, armed intervention on either side became impossible for Britain. 90

We have seen that, when for a moment the government considered seriously the possibility of giving military support to Austria, it was only on the absolute condition that Italy should remain neutral and should be given Venetia. This step, however, was taken too late, as Italy was by then pledged to Prussia. Whether Britain and France, acting in concert, could have forced la Marmora to throw aside his scruples, or to resign his position as minister and allow himself to be replaced by some one not committed to the Prussian alliance, is uncertain. 91

Apart altogether from the Question of Italy, however, intervention between the German powers would have been a very difficult and dangerous matter.

The German situation was completely misunderstood by the British/

government. It may be hazarded that even the Conservative government which followed, though more ignorant of details, had a clearer general idea of the significance of the situation in Germany.

Russell and Clarendon, and most of the diplomatic representatives of Britain, persisted in regarding the Austro-Prussian difference as being merely ^{Danish} ~~what on its face it was~~ a quarrel for the possession of the ~~Elbe~~ Duchies. In truth, the question of the Duchies was ~~(only)~~ a secondary issue. Bismarck was making use of it to force a quarrel on Austria. He meant to have the Duchies of course---but he had a much more important object. It may almost be said that the war was inevitable, and that any German statesman, whatever his methods, who had set himself to unify Germany, would have had to face such a war sooner or later, unless a complete change took place in the conduct of Austria. If Franz Josef had died, and a statesman of genius had taken over the direction of affairs in Vienna, the struggle might have been avoided. The war was fought, not only to make Prussia supreme in Germany, but to drive Austria out of Germany: for Austria was, in all her real interests, and in all that justified her existence, a non-German state. Austria, out of Germany, might be a valuable member of the community of European States; in Germany, ^{she} was only a hindrance and an evil to Germany, to herself, and to Europe in general.

In this sense, the war of 1866 was a justifiable, even an inevitable war, as few wars could be, and as the Danish war was not. It was not, in its essence, a war of conquest. It was almost a defensive war. The elements of conquest, of spoliation, and of violence which accompanied it were mere Bismarckian episodes.

They were the flaws in Bismarck's policy; the expulsion of Austria was its justification. Notwithstanding its many revolting accompaniments, there is no period of his career in which he appears in so sympathetic a light, and is so completely the national hero.

Morier was the only man in British diplomacy of sufficient capacity to recognise all this.

"The heart-breaking part of it," ^{he said,} "is that its aims, as regards the anti-Austrian portion of it, are so thoroughly legitimate, whilst the means used are so thoroughly damnable. The presence of Austria in Germany and Italy is the fatal bar in the way of progress, first for Austria, second for Germany, third for Italy. I am myself convinced this might have been effected by peaceful means and by the mere natural course of liberal development. Bismarck has determined it otherwise. He has had recourse to a brutal surgical operation to effect that which, I am convinced, might have been done by diet and steady training. The patient will very likely die under the operation. But heartily as I hate the operation, I must wish for its success. A signal victory on the part of Austria in the present struggle would throw Europe back three generations."

The British government were therefore in a terrible dilemma. They must choose between standing by, to watch Austria forced, ~~(against her will)~~, into a war which she had tried to avoid, or to oppose in arms Prussia, who was pursuing a highly desirable object, though with hideous and immoral methods.

They were themselves entirely to blame for the awkward position

in which they found themselves. In 1866 it was impossible to fight Bismarck without injuring Germany; but in 1864 they could have done so, and not only without injuring Germany, but doing her an incalculable service.

Armed intervention in 1864 would inevitably have led to the fall of Bismarck. Had his Danish policy failed, as when sincerely opposed by Great Britain it must have done, his position in Berlin already dangerous, would have become untenable.

The defeat of Bismarck's aims in Denmark, however, need have involved no injury to Germany. Slesvig, to be sure, would have been kept for Denmark; but the possession of Slesvig was not an indispensable condition for the security and future development of Germany. ~~(and, after her naval power had been fully established, it gave her too complete a mastery over the Baltic to be desirable for the general interests of Europe)~~ Denmark, on the other hand, even if she held Slesvig, was far too weak a power ~~(at best)~~ to threaten Germany. 98.

The fall of Bismarck would have cleared the way for the Liberal party. The King would have been obliged to surrender to them at last. He might have abdicated, as he had threatened, in which case he would have been succeeded by the Liberal and intelligent Crown Prince. In any case, absolute government in Prussia would have been at an end, and Germany would have been free to develop on liberal and constitutional lines. There is no doubt that the accomplishment of the unification of Germany would have been a slower and more gradual process than when it was attained through "Blood and Iron", but that it would have been seriously thrown back is not to be feared. It had already 99.

gone too far, before Bismarck appeared - on the scene, to leave the ultimate issue in doubt. It would, however, have proceeded on very ¹⁰⁰ different lines.

Germany would have received a most salutary lesson. She would have learned that force and lawlessness were not to be allowed to prey unchecked upon weakness; that the Power-State would, sooner or later, inevitably find its neighbours arrayed in arms against it. The gospel of "Blood and Iron" would have met, in its very beginnings, the only reply ~~effectual in checking~~ ^{that might have checked} its progress. The inborn tendencies of the national character towards the worship of force and the lust of conquest would have been stamped down just as they were beginning to show themselves afresh. It would have been well for the world if this lesson had ¹⁰¹ been learnt in 1864, and not in 1918.

Such a policy was, however, too late in 1866. For two years the Pomeranian wizard had been at his incantations, twining the most diverse strands into one strong rope:

Black spirits and white! Red spirits and grey!

Mingle, mingle, mingle, mingle,

You that mingle may!

Good and evil were now inextricably interfused. The hour of opportunity was past. All that was left was to make the best of a bad business, and hunt for some plan that might in part repair the damage done:----save Austria from Germany, and Germany from herself!

The difficulty about saving Austria was that Austria was so ¹⁰² unwilling to be saved. Like the elephant who laboured under the ¹⁰³ delusion that he was a butterfly, Austria had always been a

victim to the idea that she was a German state, whereas, as her greatest statesman and soldier had seen, her best fortune lay to the East. To an outsider, untrammelled by prejudice and tradition, it might have seemed that on Austria lay the most glorious mission of any state in Europe: Austria, ~~(the only state on the continent, which was not a nation (except Turkey))~~, might have preached the gospel of a higher patriotism, transcending the bounds of race and language, and attaching her subjects by the ¹⁰³ bond of a common ideal and a common interest: Austria, ~~(the most easterly of the civilised states of Europe)~~, the old defender of Christendom against the Mohammedan power, might have become the champion, the protector, and the enlightened teacher of the Balkan provinces in their struggle for liberty. ~~(She could use the most cultured of her various subjects to aid and uplift the more backward ones.)~~ What might not that state have aspired to, which could draw for its resources upon the loyalty and simplicity of the Tyrol, the courage and vivacity of Hungary, the solid worth and enterprise of German-Austria, the patriotism and imagination of Checho-Slovakia, and the primitive vigour of the South Slavonic states? To these aims, Austria, for a hundred and fifty years, had been ¹⁰⁴ resolutely blind. In her own sphere she had lamentably failed. Her government had relied on force and violence to hold together the heterogeneous collection of states and provinces that made up the Empire, and ^{had made no} ~~any~~ attempt to conquer the loyalty and affection of their peoples. Internal reforms and foreign prestige had alike been sacrificed in vain efforts to preserve Austria's influence in Germany. ~~(--vain, because that influence throughout this period had been steadily waning.)~~

104 Austria could only have been saved in 1866 by a statesman of genius, who was capable of sufficient foresight and abnegation to withdraw from German affairs. As it was, she had only 105 ministers of mediocre capacity, and she was cursed with a ruler who combined all the most dangerous faults and follies of the Hapsburgs.

In the case in which she stood, therefore, Austria could only be saved by efforts from outside.

The situation required desperate sacrifices. Austria would have to cede Venetia, give up Holstein to Prussia, withdraw from the German Confederation, and turn all her attention to internal reforms, financial and political, which were urgently needed.

It was very late in the day; but determined action might still have saved her. There was a great deal of vitality in the 106 Empire yet; as is proved by the fact that even after she had been deprived of Venetia, Holstein, and her German position by a disastrous war, so incomplete a reform as the establishment of the Dual Monarchy was sufficient to preserve her until the day of a European cataclysm.

It was perhaps too great a sacrifice to expect of any mortal minister of state; but when forced to it by pressure from without, Austria might have been driven to consent to it.

Here, then, was the only possible policy for the British government. If Austria were induced to make these concessions, the 107 reason for Bismarck's existence at once disappeared. He might have kept his position---very ^{probably} possibly would have---but he would be committed to a long constitutional struggle with the opposition, and would be absorbed in internal problems for a long

~~time~~ time ahead. It is well known that Bismarck rode to popularity on the strength of his victory over Austria. Nothing

12. succeeds like success. Take away war and victory, and Bismarck is left as he was in 1865, the detested minister of a reactionary government. Germany is free of Austria, but not by his efforts; Austria is left as she was indeed left in 1866, shorn of two provinces, but not exhausted by a terrible defeat; Italy has Venetia, without any thanks to Prussia; Prussia has had to accept Holstein as the gift of Europe in Congress; and the prestige of the Western Powers stands higher than since 1863. 108.

In this case Bismarck's teeth and claws would be drawn, and Germany would have gained practically all that she did gain, but without an unrighteous war, and without surrendering her Liberal principles.

For Great Britain, however, this policy was a very difficult one. It could only have been carried out in conjunction with 109. France, for neither country, acting alone, could have induced Austria to agree; and if Napoleon had continued his secret intrigues with Prussia, Great Britain would have been at a great disadvantage. When we remember, however, what large concessions Austria made to secure French neutrality, we may guess that the influence of France and Britain together could have obtained 110. much more from her; while, if she were obstinate, her financial difficulties offered a very simple way of applying the thumb-screws.

One thing remains to be considered---could Great Britain have secured the support and confidence of France?

The state of mind of the Emperor, his indecision and alarm, have been described.

been described.

He had been in the past really attached to the British Alliance.

Events since 1859, and the continued coldness and suspicion of the British government, had driven him to abandon it as impossible.

The commercial treaty, on which he had relied to win the friendship of Great Britain, had had little effect. If that country continued to distrust all the aims of France, and to consider the treaties of 1815 as the foundation of the European polity, and every proposal to revise them as criminal, it was difficult for Napoleon to rely upon her as an ally. The Emperor, however, knew well that he was ^{now} in a very dangerous position, ~~in 1866~~. It was not only ambition and selfishness which drove him to so deceitful and contradictory a course: it was also fear, and a consciousness of his own weakness. If he had known that he could really obtain loyal support from Great Britain for a policy based on the fourth alternative plan, the knowledge would have done much to determine him upon that policy. Drouyn de Lhuys, it will be remembered, always favoured action on these lines. ~~(and Drouyn de Lhuys, if he had not had a master so difficult to serve, would have been a fairly honest and unselfish politician.)~~ 112

France had been wounded and disgusted by the policy of Great Britain during the last few years. It might have been hard for the government to convince her of their sincerity: but confidence begets confidence. An open and friendly exposition of the policy that Britain wished to pursue, a request for French support, and if necessary the guarantee that Great Britain would not oppose France if she took possession of Luxembourg by amicable arrangement, would have produced a complete revulsion of feeling in Paris. Such a concession would really have

been a far better security for Belgium and the Rhine, [✓] ~~as far as~~ ¹¹³ ~~Napoleon was concerned~~, than any threats of war or treaties of guarantee. It was the knowledge that Great Britain would not consent to any such territorial gains on his part, however, small, that inclined Napoleon to try to make a bargain with Prussia instead. He saw, by this time, that Prussia was bound to get something, and he naturally wanted compensation.

Morier, a more devoted friend of Germany, and a more enlightened patriot, than any member of his government, would not have hesitated to make such concessions to France.

"That, if there should result from this war grave territorial changes such as to alter very gravely the relative strength of the military monarchies of Europe, France should expect some corresponding advantages, is so absurdly fair that it is inconceivable to me, that even that dullest of corniferi, John Bull, should shake his foolish head at it," ⁽⁹⁷⁾ ~~he~~ ^{he wrote.} ^{114.}

It may be at once admitted that such a policy was not to be expected from the Liberal government then in power. Russell, Clarendon, Gladstone, Granville, were one and all so eaten up with fear and suspicion of France ~~(and of Napoleon)~~, that they would no more have entered on such a course than they would have invited the United States to conquer Mexico for them. While they still imagined that the Slesvig-Holstein question was at the root of the German quarrel; that Prussia could be confined to her present limits; that Austria ought to preserve her influence in Germany; that Italy would never stoop to make a treaty with Prussia; and that the possession of Luxembourg by France would threaten the peace of

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Europe and the security of Great Britain: they would not consider such a policy at all. Even had they done so, it would have been difficult to carry it out without superseding Lord Cowley. ¹¹⁶
It is small wonder that the relations between Britain and France were bad during this period, when we consider the character of this ambassador. A stiff, commonplace, self-absorbed man, he despised the French character, distrusted and disliked the French ministers, and hated and feared the influence of France in Europe. Such was the man to whom the most delicate tasks were entrusted at a time critical in the history of Europe. What shall we say of the ^{system} ~~government~~, which, from 1863 to 1867, ^{left the} ~~placed its affairs~~ ^{of Britain} ~~in~~ ^{to be transacted by} the hands of Lord Cowley at Paris, Lord Napier and Lord Augustus Loftus at Berlin, and Sir Andrew Buchanan at St Petersburg, and left Robert Morier as chargé d'affaires at Frankfort? ¹¹⁷

It must also be remembered that the hostile attitude taken up by Russell and Clarendon towards Prussia, was not one of hostility to Germany. It was only opposition to Bismarck. They were still sufficiently influenced by their desire to see a strong united Germany, to hesitate before entering into an alliance with France, even to oppose Bismarck.

So ended the second phase of the making of Germany. The policy of force had again been victorious, and with a victory far more complete than before. In 1864 Bismarck had only defeated external foes, whether in the field or in the council-chamber. Now he had conquered the minds and hearts of the German people. ¹¹⁸ 94

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English party

One of the great disadvantages of the Victorian parliamentary system was that it involved a continual retracing of the steps, a continual going back to beginnings, and a consequent failure to profit by experience gained.

The party in opposition came into power entirely ignorant of the details of the diplomacy of the years past. They had seen only the results, and seen them in a spirit largely of controversy. The new Foreign Secretary had no time to read up old despatches: He had to rely on what the Permanent Under-Secretary told him, ~~and the Permanent Under-Secretary of this time has become a byword for official incompetence.~~ (1)

The Conservative Party, then, came into office in July 1866 with much the same views on international questions as they had held in 1863. They had, to be sure, a vastly increased opinion of the Prussian army; but they were even more frightened of France than their predecessors, and ~~they~~ ^{like them} also believed that Napoleon held the destinies of Europe in his hands. They had some opinion of the capacity of Bismarck, and they regarded him, ~~as~~ ^{the} representative of Prussia, as the sole hope against French domination. They were thankful that he had so far held his own against Napoleon.

The new government, however, had one advantage over their predecessors. They had, according to their lights, revised their policy. They had a few years before been closely attached to

~~Mr Hammond.~~

Austria: but now that Austria was thoroughly beaten, and France, as they thought, cock of the walk, they did not intend to support Austria, and so further weaken Prussia as a possible counter-weight to France. They had been very hostile to Italy in 1860; but they thought it much too late in the day to try to hinder the formation of a United Italy now. There are few things so invigorating as the process of completely changing one's mind; it leaves the intellect in a brisk and apprehensive state. Count Apponyi, who called upon Lord Stanley, the new Foreign Secretary, to beg for British assistance for Austria, received something of a shock. It was natural to suppose that Austria's old friends would be even more sympathetic to her than the Liberal government had been; but after the warmth of Clarendon's declarations, Stanley's reply must have been to the Austrian ambassador like a douche of cold water.

Austria, Apponyi said, while using the good offices of France, could not ask officially for British mediation, but "she would nevertheless be glad of the good offices of H.M. Government, so far as they could be exerted, and she wished that England and Russia which have hitherto stood aloof, should exercise their right of interfering in order to check the excessive pretensions of Prussia... He. ^(Apponyi) stated in very courteous terms his dissent from the opinion which I ^(Stanley) had expressed" (in the House of Commons) as to the formation of a strong and compact power in the North of Germany being neither injurious nor inconvenient to England. His Excellency thought that the existence of such a power involved a future risk of war. Neither France nor Russia, he considered, were likely long to remain on good terms with a neighbour so powerful and so ambitious. --- I said that I could not

agree in this opinion; that I thought on the contrary that the danger of disturbance to the peace of Europe lay in the weakness rather than the strength of Germany.---An allusion having been to the treaties of 1815, I did not hesitate to express my belief that in the actual state of Europe, it was ~~not~~ to these treaties as being still binding.---In answer to 6.

Count Apponyi's request for the intervention of H.M. Government, I said that we should not in any case interfere willingly, and certainly we could not do so unless we knew first on what basis Austria was prepared to treat." France and Prussia, he said, would expect Austria to leave the German Confederation. "Count Apponyi thanked me for the frankness with which I had spoken, adding that it was better for his government to understand the situation distinctly (1) than to be encouraged in delusive expectations of support."

That any British minister should thus coolly repudiate the treaties of 1815 was startling enough; but that ~~the statement~~ ^{should do so} ~~should come from~~ a Conservative was even more surprising. Morier had piously thanked heaven when he heard that the new Foreign Secretary was to be Lord Stanley. This was the first sign that a policy less hampered by moral and political conventions, and more in tune with the realities of the day, might ~~(perhaps)~~ be expected from London. 7

Austria then requested that Britain would intervene to prevent Italy's pressing her demands for Trent. Stanley refused: "nor," said he, "was I willing to support a demand which though professedly referring only to the ...armistice...must be considered as indi- 8

(1) (F.O. Austria, 702.) Stanley to Bloomfield 21. July 1866.

ating an opinion that the territory in question ought ultimately
(2)
to belong to Austria, and not to Italy."

After this the appeals of Austria ceased.

It was in the first week of August that the Conservative government first received an intimation that the triumph of France was not so complete as they had imagined.

It became known that Prussia not only demanded a paramount influence in the North of Germany, but intended to make large annexations there. Not only the Elbe Duchies, but Hanover, Nassau, Hesse-Cassel, the northern portion of Hesse-Darmstadt, and Frankfurt, were to be absorbed, ~~by Prussia~~, while Saxony, though pre-
serving its monarchy, would be completely under ^{Prussian} ~~her~~ control. 9

Napoleon, egged on by Drouyn de Lhuys, now demanded his compensation, and Benedetti wrote a letter to Bismarck, enclosing a projet for the cession of the Rhenish provinces to France. Bismarck declined point-blank, and published both demand and refusal in the newspapers.

The result was sufficiently disastrous for France. All movements in her favour among the South German states immediately ceased, and Russia abandoned the proposals she had been pressing for a Congress to revise the Prussian terms: Drouyn de Lhuys resigned: and Europe woke up to the fact that Napoleon had been
completely fooled by the Prussian firebrand. 10

P.O. Austria 7032. Stanley to Bloomfield. 9 August. 1866.

Benedetti had been urging for some time that he should be recalled ~~(back)~~ to Paris to explain the situation there; but he was only allowed to come after presenting the French demands to Bismarck. When at length he arrived his arguments convinced Napoleon that further attempts on Bismarck would be wasted effort, and the requests for compensation on the Rhine ceased. The Emperor, however, could not yet resign himself to the worst; and after a few days the pourparlers about "compensation" were renewed, ^{only} ~~and~~ this time Belgium was the subject.

Bismarck meanwhile was concluding the treaty of Prague, which excluded Austria from Germany, and left Prussia undisputed mistress of the North. It was only, in fact, owing to concessions deliberately made by the Prussian minister, who preferred not to have a war this year, that Napoleon was able to retire with some show of credit. Even as it was, these concessions were of the most insubstantial nature: they made a momentary impression of success: but in a short time, like *fairy gold* that melts away, they were seen to be illusory. They were of two kinds, public and private. Those which were made public consisted, firstly, of an engagement that the South German states, (Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden,) should not be included in the new North German Confederation; and secondly, of a promise that a plebiscite should be taken in North Slesvig.

The secret concessions ^{consisted in} ~~were simply~~ an assurance that, though refused for the time being, the promised compensation should be allowed to France later.

Exactly who was responsible for the proposals relating to Belgium cannot even now be determined. It seems fairly certain that Goltz lured on Napoleon by conversations in Paris, and Benedetti and Bismarck must share the responsibility of what happened in Berlin. Each of them afterwards attributed the guilt to the other, and each represented himself as the innocent hearer of an iniquitous proposal: but such proposals are never ^{put} made forward unless a good guess ^{can} be made as to the manner in which they will be received. Bismarck had several times before this endeavoured to turn the eyes of the Emperor to Belgium, partly because it would ~~(if ever suspected)~~ embroil France with Britain. On the other hand, the paper is in Benedetti's handwriting, even if, as he maintained, it was dictated by Bismarck.

The document, as is well known, was a projet du traité stating that Prussia would support France in annexing Belgium at the first opportunity, and that France might also obtain Luxembourg.

Benedetti communicated the scheme to his Emperor, and Napoleon ^{telegraphed} wired to him "acceptez en principe".

Immediately after this, however, Bismarck's enthusiasm for the Belgian scheme cooled, and he suggested that, in order to avoid offending Britain, Napoleon should rather look for compensation to Luxembourg; and, apparently as a memento of a happy meeting, he induced Benedetti to let him keep the copy of the Belgian proposal, which the French statesman had written out with his own hand, and corrected, according to his own account, under Bismarck's instructions. (3) ✓

(3) Benedetti, Chap. IV. p. 178 ff. ✓

21
[Disraeli, years later, wrote to his Queen that the misfortunes of ^{at} the imperial house might have served as the materials for a Greek trilogy. Indeed the imagination of a Shakespeare or an Ibsen might have found food here, and only the creators of Macbeth or Skule Jarl could adequately paint the mind of the wretched being in the Tuileries -- poor mortal who had claimed a place among the gods, and who now found himself confronted with a Titanic adversary. He had told Europe he was Napoleon, and Europe, looking to Paris, still saw Napoleon there, and was blind to the reality---the worn, sick, elderly sentimentalist; the wrecked adventurer; the idealist who saw his ideals shattered; the cheat who had deceived himself as much as others. Self-deceitful as he was, he was no fool: he must have understood, in the moments when he was not dazed by the illusions he had conjured up, or stupified by the paroxysms of the disease that was slowly killing him, that it was his deadliest enemy who had penetrated his pretence and justly estimated his worth. Not only the sick man's aversion to action, and the humane man's aversion to war, made him anxious to avoid rupture, but also his instinctive feeling that he was unfit to face such a foe. Yet to avoid war, he knew,

16.

17.

meant to abandon his claim to be the director of European politics, and by that claim really hung his title to the throne of France. ~~(and while he struggled with the contradictory impulses of his own mind, rival parties in the state struggled around him.)~~

As time passed, it slowly dawned on the British statesmen that France had not won an increase of influence, but had met with a shocking and humiliating ^{reverse} defeat. They realized that Napoleon was faced with the alternatives of abdicating the position he had claimed in Europe, or undertaking war to check the pretensions of Prussia. ^{Prussia} Germany had challenged France, and France was still hesitating as to her response. They had not yet, however, fully grasped the situation. They believed that the danger of war came chiefly from France: that Bismarck feared a war and was anxious to avoid it. 18.

In reality the most serious danger came from Prussia. In Berlin, a line of policy had been definitely chosen. France had defeated and humiliated Germany in the past and never made amends: France was jealous and alarmed at the growth of German power, and had interfered to try and check that growth: France must get a lesson; her power to injure Germany must be ended. 19.

In Paris, on the other hand, there was doubt, indecision, and conflict. If there was an influential war party, there was also a strong current of opinion running in favour of peace;

and Napoleon veered from one point of view to the other.

Frequently he carried on ^{at the same time} ~~the~~ one policy through his ministers, and the other by ~~simultaneous~~ secret negotiations of his own.

On the one hand the Clericals, whom he dared not offend; 20.
the military leaders, on whose support he must be able to count; and the wife whose fatal beauty had captivated him in the first hour of his success, pressed him to anticipate the hostility of Prussia, and assured him of an immediate and complete triumph. On the other hand, the majority of the population, the lower and middle classes, were averse from war, and desired no wild and violent enterprises, but peace, ~~pros-~~
~~perity~~ ^{Security} and a return to constitutional government; while the most respectable leaders of public opinion, ~~(anxiously as they~~
~~looked upon the advance of Germany, did not wish to provoke a~~
~~struggle, and)~~ ^{chiefly} were ~~more~~ concerned with internal reform. They and 21.
~~they~~ used the failure of the Emperor's German policy as an excuse
~~object lesson for their constituents.~~ ^{for attacks on his government.}

In this position, he wavered. He had neither the courage to accept defeat, and declare for peace and reform at home; nor had he the courage to make the immediate break with Prussia which would give a militant policy its only chance of success.

The alternatives were clearly set before him, by the only ~~adviser~~
~~of any real ability whom he possessed.~~ The most able of the French statesmen were ~~those~~ in opposition or exile, and without influence on affairs; the Empress and the military

leaders were in a state of ^{ignorance} and blind self-confidence which has become proverbial; and his ministers were ^{mostly} men of mean capacity. He had, however, in his cousin a councillor who was one of the most keen-sighted observers of the Europe of the day. Prince Napoleon had a more correct idea of the relative strength of France and Germany than perhaps any one else in France, and he believed that a peace policy was the only safe one. Prussia was getting stronger every day; if there must be war, it must be now or never, but better never. To imagine that France would obtain any support in the Rhine countries or South Germany was pure illusion. (14)

Unfortunately, however, Prince Napoleon was without any real influence on affairs. Both his unpleasing reputation, and some innate weakness or decay in his character, had prevented him from taking the position in politics to which his statesmanlike judgment gave him some claim; and his warnings, even if ever really pressed upon the Emperor, had no effect. 23

(14) See the letters of Lord Lyons for 1868, Newton's Lyons, Vol. I Ch. 6.

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As the worthlessness of the Prague engagements became clear to Napoleon, he began to be more anxious than ever for his promised compensation. Accordingly with the opening of the year 1867, we find a general atmosphere of "something's going to happen" pervading the chancelleries. And when the full extent of the success of Prussia began to be realised, it became necessary to obtain some tangible gain at once to counter-balance the shock given to public opinion in France. He Napoleon decided that it was time that the secret arrangement about Luxembourg should be carried out. Bismarck had approved this proposal, and the grand-duchy itself was at present in an anomalous condition which favoured any attempt to change its status.

27.

The King of Holland had stood in the same relationship towards the German Confederation as had the King of Denmark. His representative had sat in the German Diet for the provinces of Luxembourg and Limburg.

(Since the break-up of that Confederation, the position of these two little states had been uncertain. They had not been included in the new North German Confederation, ~~(for not the most ardent German nationalist had yet had the courage to put forward a claim for Dutch Limburg, or French Luxembourg,~~ ^{and} ~~their future~~ ^{of the two, therefore}) had still to be settled.

In the meantime the uncertainties of the last few months had been keeping the statesmen of every country in a condition of chronic nightmare.

28.

29 London was endeavouring to pour oil upon waters which showed no disposition to become calm, ~~(and all the attention which ministers could spare from an exciting internal crisis was devoted to giving pacific advice to France, and to soothing the nervous paroxysms of Bismarck, who for the time being was representing himself to Britain as a defenceless lamb alarmed by the howling of a hungry wolf. The position of the Cabinet was especially trying, as all their energies were absorbed by home affairs, and they had a vague subconscious feeling that it was tactless of France and Prussia to be fussing about a war at the very moment when Disraeli was occupied with his Reform Bill. (This, however, led to the conduct of the affairs being left more than usual to the discretion of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Stanley -- a chance which was, as will be seen, not unfortunate for all concerned.)~~

Austria had now selected as Prime Minister Count Beust, who had been expelled from his position in Saxony, largely because of the enmity of Bismarck, on the failure of his policy in 1866. Beust was for the present solacing himself by making epigrams about his enemy, but he looked eagerly for a possibility of revenge. The slender and vivacious little man, "chaque heure du jour un projet dans la tête, une haine dans le coeur, et une circulaire dans son encrier", ~~(11)~~ looked on the prospect of a Franco-German war with none of the horror displayed by

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British ministers. It might offer an opportunity to restore to Austria something of what she had lost in central Europe, and to revenge ^{her and} ~~himself. and her.~~ (~~Beust even had wild dreams about Silesia~~) But still his position was very uncertain. Austria had received such a thorough whipping that it would be impossible to take any steps against Prussia until that country had been definitely worsted by France, and even then the feelings of Austria's German subjects must be taken into account. ~~They could not be expected to take the side of France with enthusiasm, and~~ They had already displayed some desire to abandon Austria and be united with their fellow Germans to the North, and a war with France would try their loyalty and might give the last shock to the tottering dominion of the Hapsburgs. Perhaps it would be safer to hope for peace, a peace favourable to France, which would strengthen her position towards Germany (5) and so make Prussian power less threatening to weaker states. ~~There might even be a possibility of a general redistribution of territory which would give Austria a tit-bit.~~ (1)

Russia had already chosen her part and made her understanding with Bismarck. She was to continue her old policy of tacit support of Prussia: but there was some uneasiness in St. Petersburg. The understanding with Prussia had already been crowned with brilliant success---for Prussia. But the advantages which Russia was to reap from it had not yet materialised. Russia was becoming impatient for some positive and

(5) Beust in his Memoirs represents his attitude to have been much more friendly to Prussia, and less friendly to France, than contemporary papers prove it to have been.

intangible gain. Moreover, Russia by no means desired a complete defeat ^{for} France. That would put Germany in a position ^{too commanding.} which would threaten Russia as well as the other European states. Prussian success was all very well, but one can have too much of a good thing. Enough, Gortschakov was whispering to his master, is as good as a feast. For Gortschakov, vain and frivolous old gentleman, was becoming jealous of his erstwhile disciple. He had an uncomfortable feeling that Bismarck's admiration in the past was not altogether sincere. ^{he} (Moreover, Gortschakov had a real affection for France, and had always had a leaning towards an understanding with that country if possible). The Tsar preferred the Prussian alliance, but Gortschakov was not so sure about it, and even the Tsar did not wish to see his uncle Wilhelm cock of the walk, to the exclusion of everyone else. 33

In Italy the situation was acutely uncomfortable. The government of Victor Emmanuel was openminded, and was ready to join whichever party would give the most. Victor Emmanuel would have preferred France, after all--for the hatred of the Tedeschi was not to be lightly overcome --but he was gaping to swallow Rome. (He had rather have Rome with Napoleon's malison than the Pope with his benison, he felt, like the misguided boy in the fairy tale.) He watched all agog to see which way the cat would jump.

Denmark too watched with anxiety. She would dearly have loved her revenge on Prussia, and the restoration of North Slesvig at least, ^{and} ⁽¹⁾ A strong party existed which was ready to declare war on the side of France. But she also had learnt to be cautious.

The little buffer states that lay between France and Germany were, however, in the most pitiable situation. They guessed that there was some talk of compensation for France, and they were not quite sure whence that compensation was to come. Even more nervously did they look towards Prussia. After all, they had lived for 30 years beside France without that country having made any attempt to subvert their independence; whereas the conduct of Prussia towards Denmark and Austria was fresh in their memory. In Belgium a war was regarded as almost inevitable, and ~~in this case the~~ ^{that} little country believed that her inevitable fate would be to be annexed by the victor. The Belgian Government had decided that the best chance of preserving their security was to join with France. For one thing, if they must be annexed, they had rather be annexed by France

(1) F.O. Denmark, 342.

(2) "The same persons who were employed to ascertain the condition of popular feeling in Savoy and Nice previous to its (sic) annexation have just returned from a similar mission of investigation in Belgium, and...they report that the popular feeling in that country is eminently favourable to France". (Fane F.O. France, 1656). 26 Jan. 1866.

F.O. France 1656.

than by Germany; for another, they were grateful for the courteous way in which Napoleon had invariably treated them, and for the third, they had some hope that ^(his) gratitude for their support might induce him to be merciful. 36.

"Should this country" said M. van de ^{Weyer} ~~Weyer~~ during the crisis, "left unprotected, be forced to take up arms, they would certainly side with France rather than with Prussia, as it is well known that Count Bismarck has for some time past been ready, so far as willingness could prevail, to sacrifice Belgian nationality to France as a set off for the security of other possessions actually acquired, or contemplated for the aggrandisement of Prussia, while the Emperor Louis Napoleon, on the contrary has steadily manifested his cordial acceptance of the nationality of Belgium as a neutral power". (6) Belgium in this difficulty appealed to Great Britain. She did not receive much encouragement from the cautious Lord Stanley, who had no intention of following with regard to Belgium the policy of Lord Russell towards Denmark. Nor did Belgium intend to fall into the Danes' error; she wished to ascertain the attitude of Great Britain, but she meant to rely on her own efforts to defend herself. Her army was in good order, and she was prepared to fight rather than to accede to the demand for the use of her Eastern railway which she expected from Prussia. 37. (7)

- (6) F.O. Belgium, 276. Howard de Walden to F.O. 16 April 1867.
 (7) F.O. Belgium, 276. 36. 22 April 1867.

The position of Holland was, at this time, even more uncomfortable than that of Belgium, owing to her connection with Luxembourg and Limburg. ~~(Not the most)~~ ^{ardent} German nationalist ~~could not be~~ ^{contended} ~~could~~ seriously ~~claim~~ that Luxembourg, which in 1839 had begged for union with Belgium, and had been united to the German Confederation very much against its will, ought to be ~~part of~~ ^{merged in North} Germany; moreover the position of the Duchy was so threatening to the French frontier that such a claim from Germany must inevitably have ~~seemed~~ ^{seemed} ~~a deliberate attempt to provoke a war with France.~~ ^{started a war in which France would have been justified in the eyes of Europe.} Bismarck himself ~~dared not make it.~~ ^{claim this.} But meantime the Prussian garrison, which under the old constitution of the German Confederation occupied the fortress, still continued there, though their presence ~~was now illegal.~~ ^{now legal} or ~~rather~~ had ~~no~~ ^{now legal} justification ~~(in law).~~ It was the presence of these troops and the fear that Prussia might refuse to give up the fortress, that alarmed Holland. By raising difficulties about the occupation of the fortress and the status of the Duchy, Prussia could easily draw Holland into a controversy similar to that in which Denmark had been involved, and which might have a like ending. No doubt the Prussian Archives were rich in ambiguous historical documents dealing with Luxembourg. Two years before Bismarck had told a Dutch diplomatist (8) that he looked upon the annexation of Holland with her Colonies as necessary to the completion of his plans for the extension of the naval power of Prussia. Luxembourg was of no use ~~(whatever)~~ to Holland, and the King-Grand-Duke was as anxious to get rid of his highly combustible possession as

(8) Hichern. ~~See~~ F.O. Austria, 722. Bloomfield to F.O. 17 April 1867. ✓

was the Dynamiter of his infernal machine. The Luxembourggeois themselves had been fairly content with the rule of Holland, which had not unduly interfered with their affairs; but the general opinion was rather in favour of France.

Holland was, ^{however} ~~moreover~~, by no means anxious to get rid of her own Dutch province of Limburg, and Limburg had been bound by the same artificial connection with Germany, and was open to the same danger, as Luxembourg. At the opening of the year 1867 Bismarck's conduct (~~in regard to this~~) became alarming. He had seemed to be meditating a new war, and though he told Holland that he meant to attack Austria again, he told Austria that he meant to attack Holland, and naturally Austria dropped a hint of this to the Dutch. ~~(minister)~~ Then Bismarck began to complain of the tone of the Dutch Press---always a danger-signal with him. He said that Maastricht ought to be German. He tentatively tried some sentimentalities about the old connection of Limburg with the Reich. Exactly what Bismarck intended by this conduct cannot be determined. According to what ^{(q) he had} Napoleon told Lord Cowley, Bismarck promised France that he "would press the Dutch Government on the question of Limburg, and so make them desirous of conciliating the French government," so that they might readily accept the French proposal

(q) F.O. France, 1569. Cowley, ^{to F.O.} 8.4.67.
Opine.

about Luxembourg. Was Bismarck lying to Napoleon, or Napoleon lying to Cowley? It is difficult to believe that Bismarck would take so much trouble to induce this very willing horse to approach the water. Holland was itching to get rid of Luxembourg, and ready to jump at any offer. But whatever Bismarck's motives, his action bore so strong a resemblance to his methods in the Danish question that he soon sent the Dutch into a panic, and they were continually running to France and Britain with cries of "Wolf!" and complaints, which in the case of Britain usually ended with impertinent assurances that Holland had no intention of following in the steps of Denmark. (10) As has already been described, Holland intended to cast in her lot with France in case of war, but though she relied more on French support than on British, she was doubtful.

"During the second week of May", the Queen of Holland wrote later to Clarendon, when the danger was past for the time, "when the Conference was sitting, France proposed to us a treaty offensive and defensive, nous garantissant l'intégrité de notre territoire. As usual we hesitated. When the Conference was concluded--a peaceful result obtained---they returned with this offer, which to this hour we have not accepted... This proves to me clearly that there will be war --

(10) "Count de Zuylen expressed his opinion that Great Britain had but to say the word, and these designs against his country would be defeated, but the example of Denmark had a tendency to weaken their reliance in (sic) mere sympathy". (F.O. Holland, 441. 1.5.67). "looking at the result which attended the intervention of Foreign Powers in the affairs of Denmark, they have no wish to invite any such intervention in that of the Netherlands". (F.O. Prussia, 615. 25 Feb. 1867, F.O. Prussia, 615.) (ward to F.O. march)

"that France would like to use this country to disembark her troops to enter Prussia that way. If we continue to refuse, we will not only have the threatening enmity of Prussia, but lose the assistance of France, and remain utterly forsaken. (u) What is to be done"?

Just when Bismarck had succeeded in making everyone thoroughly uncomfortable, he announced the South German treaties. A few days later Napoleon III made the King of Holland an offer to buy from him the Duchy of Luxembourg. This scheme was submitted to Bismarck before the offer was finally made to Holland, and was favourably received by him. He told Benedetti that King William had said that if the Luxembourgeois themselves favoured union with France, then "I have nothing to reproach myself with towards the German people. It is a matter for the King of Holland" (12)

Bismarck himself said that ^{of Prussia} the King would give no promise: he would "allow the abdication to happen" but would not lay himself open to the accusation afterwards that he had given his assent beforehand. (13) This satisfied the Imperial government that they had nothing to apprehend from Prussia, and the offer was then made to the Dutch, and was communicated to the other governments of Europe. #7.

7 June 1867.
(1) Clarendon, II. p. 335.
(2) Sybel, Vol. 6, p. 104.

(3) "Der König von Preussen kann die Abtretung geschehen lassen, aber nicht zugeben, dass Jemand behauptete er habe ihn im voraus zugestimmt". Sybel. Vol. 6, p. 107.

The plan met with general approval, for it was eminently calculated to preserve peace. This gain to France would, without weakening Germany, soothe the wounded pride of the French, give an equivalent for the late acquisitions of Prussia, and strengthen the Emperor in his efforts to keep the war party in France in check. The nervous strain upon the other Powers would be removed as the danger of war lessened, and Belgium especially would feel herself more secure now that the ambition of Napoleon was satisfied in another direction; while the artificial connection with Luxembourg, which was so embarrassing to Holland, would be ended. ~~The proposal was received without surprise: it had long been believed that an understanding of this nature existed between France and Prussia, and everyone was relieved that it appeared in a form so satisfactory and safe.~~ HY.

The Conservative Government in Britain had come into power pledged to a policy of non-intervention. They were anxious to avoid the faults of meddling and blustering which they had condemned in the Russell-Palmerston government, and they had until now maintained an attitude of extreme caution and reserve. This policy was eminently congenial to the temper of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Stanley, who had so perfectly schooled his Ambassadors that (now) even Lord Augustus Loftus had almost ceased to scold, while it was the most uncommon occurrence for any of the others to give vent to a statement that could be construed as having any definite meaning in it. Stanley was a slow but not a stupid man: honest and sincere where the ^{interests were} welfare of his party was not in question: bewildered perhaps in an emergency, but tenacious of what he believed to be right: greedy of office, obstinate, and resentful: but he had some qualities that went to make a good foreign secretary. He had a strong sense of his dignity as the representative of a great nation: he would neither nag, nor quarrel, nor give advice where it was not wanted. He was unmoved by bullying and by flattery alike, and the hysterical outbursts of Bismarck and the harangues with which he was accustomed to daze and madden his contemporaries ran harmlessly off the ducklike plumage of Lord Stanley. (He was just and fair-minded, if not subtle or imaginative, and once he had formed an opinion on the merits of a case he was impervious to any argument save that of brute force.)

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50.

On the question of Luxembourg Lord Stanley shared the general opinion of Europe. He thought it natural that France should want to obtain some compensation for Prussia's gains. He saw no reason why, when we had not opposed the territorial acquisitions of Prussia, we should oppose those of France, ~~(simply because we had had several wars with the latter country in the past.)~~ He did not have nightmares about les Idées Napoléoniennes, and he was totally indifferent to the sentimental value of the tie which had once bound Luxembourg to Germany. As has already been said, the rest of the government were largely content to leave the Foreign Secretary to his own devices. They found the bewildering Reform Bill, which their Prime Minister had told them they were going to pass, demanded all their powers of attention. But the most influential of them were predisposed to favour France. Disraeli was as yet a believer in the French alliance; Malmesbury was a personal friend of Napoleon III; Salisbury detested the policy of ~~(11)~~ Bismarck. They, like Stanley, were inclined to approve the transaction, and France was given to understand that no opposition would be made to the transfer of the Duchy. They had no grounds for believing that Prussia would object to the transaction, ~~(they believed, like others, that Bismarck had already given his consent)~~ ^{for he} and Bismarck had informed them in September, 1866, "Prussia had no personal interest or wish with respect to Luxembourg", and "was quite ready to renounce that treaty" (of 1816) "and withdraw her garrison" and that she was "prepared for any arrangement which may be agreeable to the King-Grand-Duke". (14)

(11) Salisbury had resigned before the actual crisis came.
 F.O. Prussia, 600. *Letter to F.O. 1 Sept. 1866.*

The King of Holland immediately gave his personal consent to the French offer, but he had been thoroughly alarmed by the earlier conduct of Prussia, and before doing anything further he wished an assurance from Berlin that Prussia did not intend to oppose the transaction or make it a pretext for war. The French government advised him to apply to Berlin at once, nothing doubting that he would receive the desired assurance without delay.

The secret began to leak out, and a violent agitation commenced in the German press. Bismarck maintained that the French government had revealed the plan too soon. Moustier, on his side, pointed out that the secret was only to have been kept until the arrangement was made, and that once the King of Holland had given his consent, he regarded it as completed, and had privately informed the other powers. On the 28th of March he first officially discussed the scheme with Lord Cowley, and had then ^{(15) ~~11~~} showed no uneasiness or alarm.

Bismarck, as Moustier said to Cowley later, had told France that he could give no preliminary consent to the transaction... If it was presented to him as an accomplished fact he should submit to it, though not without a show of displeasure ("je ferai la moue")... Pressed by M. Benedetti to express himself more clearly, M. de Bismarck stated that he should express neither disapproval nor regret, but only a certain amount of sorrow ("un peu de tristesse"). M. de Moustier also stated that Bismarck had promised to withdraw the garrison without waiting to be asked. After this France invited Holland to announce the proposed sale at Berlin; Holland had done so, and the King asked for time to consider the matter. (F.O. France, 1658,

Cowley to F.O. 28 march 1849.

The treaty was drawn up, and would have been signed on April 1st, but it was by chance postponed till next day, ⁵⁵ in order that the Dutch government might telegraph the information to the Luxembourg minister. At this point the unexpected began to happen. On the 31st of March, Bismarck sent for Bennigsen, the leader of the National Liberal party, and arranged with him that on the following day he should ask in the Reichstag what the Prussian government knew of the proposed Luxembourg scheme, and whether they were prepared to do their best to prevent this "German state" being torn from the Fatherland? On April 1st, ~~(the date comes past)~~ ⁵⁶ Benedetti arrived to inform Bismarck that the arrangements with Holland was concluded. He found Bismarck just leaving for the Reichstag, and the Chancellor checked him as he began to speak. He told Benedetti that he was going to answer Bennigsen's question, and that in the state of German opinion, it might mean war if he could not say that he knew nothing of the transaction. Benedetti returned home, therefore, without ^{(16) (17)} communicating his message. ~~the government was answered in non-~~

The question of the Dutch government was answered in non-committal terms: the King of Prussia was at liberty to make his own decision, but he must take into consideration the attitude of the Reichstag, and also of the signatory powers of 1839. This ⁵⁷ last clause is the only point in the conduct of the Prussian government that gives ground for supposing that they wished to be ^{my} conciliating, and one would like to know whether it originated with Bismarck or with the King. When taken in conjunction,

however, with the proposal which had in the meantime been made to Britain, it is susceptible to a sinister interpretation.

The historian of the "Fondation de l'Empire Allemand" points out that Bismarck may have believed that Benedetti would not dare to disobey the precise order of his government to communicate the information immediately. If he had made the communication, after Bismarck's warning, it would have been equivalent to declaring that France wanted war, or at least could easily have been represented as such. On the other hand, had the communication been made, and the Reichstag taken it as Bismarck anticipated, the technical declaration of war, whatever the provocation by France, would actually have come from Prussia. Now Bismarck did not want Prussia to declare war on France; he wanted France to declare war on Prussia. In this we find the key to his attitude. He was sincere in his warning to Benedetti, for he did not want to let the Reichstag force him into declaring war. He preferred to let the matter drag on, until France was irritated into declaring war herself. On March 31st, Bernstorff had approached Lord Stanley, and asked if Britain would interfere in any way to prevent the sale of Luxembourg. Stanley, with his usual reticence, only replied that it would be well worth the while of Prussia to consent to the transaction. On being pressed for an answer next day, he said that, the King of Holland being a consenting party, the Treaty of 1839 did not apply to the case, and Great Britain had no grounds for interfering. ~~the~~

F.O. France, 1659. Prussia. 615. Stanley to Loftis. 1 April 1867.
do 2 April 1867

If the action of Bernstorff came as an unpleasant surprise to the British Government, the reply of that Government was no less a blow to Bismarck. It is clear from the efforts he made to rouse ill-feeling, that he had ~~relied on, or at least hoped~~ ^{that} ~~for~~, the usual British dislike to any French gain ~~preventing~~ ^{would prevent} the acquiescence of that country in the sale. In this case he could have made Britain his catspaw in preventing the sale. At the same time he hoped to provoke France into declaring war on Prussia, ~~just~~ as he afterwards did in 1870. France could not possibly prove that he had encouraged her. He had ~~(of course)~~ taken no written engagements, the whole story rested on the word of Benedetti and he could always maintain that Benedetti had misunderstood or exaggerated his words. Suddenly attacked by scruples about the constitution, he now announced that he could not consent to the sale without submitting the question to the Reichstag; and it was already clear what the verdict of the Reichstag would be. At the same time, he followed his usual Spenlow and Jorkins policy with regard to the King, representing that rather bewildered old gentleman as strongly averse to the transaction. When France and Holland recovered their wits sufficiently to open their mouths, he cut short their reproaches by protesting blandly that he was helpless against the force of public opinion and will of his master.

At the same time on April 3rd Bernstorff was ~~told to~~ announced to Britain in Micawberlike phraseology that Prussia would never, no, never desert Luxembourg, and ~~to~~ ^{ask} whether "if France forced a war on Prussia", England would co-operate ⁽¹⁸⁾ against her?

It is probable that the extremely cautious policy of the British Government had deceived Bismarck as to their intelligence and their feelings; ^{and} Bismarck, indeed, ^{he} ^{thoroughly} never ~~adequately~~ understood the national character, ^{and it is very likely that} ~~the dislike he afterwards cherished for some of the Conservative leaders was due to the way in which they failed him at this moment. The great man rarely made a mistake; if he did, he never forgave those who profited by it. Bismarck was capable of liking a beaten foe; but he always hated those enemies who had met him on anything like equal terms.~~

→ The mistake which he made in this case was to expect from the Conservative Government now in power a policy similar to that of the Liberal Government they had succeeded. His own extreme preoccupation, the excessively cautious policy of Stanley, and the slight attention that Stanley's government had directed to foreign affairs, account for his mistake. The Liberal Government had been ruled by fear of France, and he did not realise that this feeling was ^{now} not so strong among the Conservatives. Apart from the personal feelings already described, the government had motives for looking favourably on the French cause, which were underestimated by Bismarck.

(18) F.O. Prussia, 615. Stanley to Loftus 3 April 1867

In the first place, the Conservative party, which did not share the Liberal enthusiasm for Nationalism, had none of the Liberal and Nationalist hatred for Austria. ~~(On the contrary, they remembered with affection the old Austro-British alliance, and)~~ They had been intensely disappointed at the result of the Six Weeks War, ^{and} The impression was still so fresh that their dislike of the victorious Prussia, whom they regarded as a bully, was very lively; they would have enjoyed seeing Prussia get a slap in the face.

Secondly, the Conservatives were more attached than their predecessors to the tradition of the Balance of Power; and this proposal was in strict accordance with that idea. They did not see the dry-rot which underlay the apparent power of France, but still they had a less exalted idea of Napoleon and the French army than they had had a year ~~(or two)~~ before. They saw that Napoleon had met with a great reverse, and considered that he had a just claim for compensation, and they believed that peace could be secured better by allowing him that compensation and soothing his irritation, than by further weakening France until she became incapable of making war. 65.

~~"I like the men about me to be fat" they said with Caesar; they considered a well-fed Napoleon would be safer than a lean and hungry one.)~~

Thirdly
In the third place, Bismarck underrated the strength of the disgust which his policy had aroused in the minds of certain men. ~~(It was his habit to sneer at disinterested action.~~

No doubt this contempt was partly assumed, for his own career was a striking example to the contrary: but he certainly did rate too low the strength of certain moral qualities. "Nothing succeeds like success" had been notably exemplified in connection with his own policy in Germany. Many of the very men who had execrated that policy a year before now vied with each other in praising him, and instead of being the most unpopular man in Germany, he was the national hero. ~~—"it was roses, roses all the way" inverted.~~

But this success had not carried the same effect with it everywhere. Many people outside Germany were dazzled by it: to some, however, Bismarck's action seemed no less a crime because it had escaped retribution; and some of these men were in the Cabinet of London. It is not a quality of the British ^{people} nation to nurse revenge or cherish hatred; ^{such} impressions of ~~(his sort)~~ dissolve very rapidly in the moist air of the islands: but this impression was still fresh. Salisbury the high-minded pessimist, had been revolted to the soul; ⁽¹⁹⁾ the solid sense of fair-play of Lord Stanley was shocked; and there had been certain elements of brutality in Bismarck's policy which had offended the subtle and refined temper of ^{Disraeli.} ~~the Jewish Premier.~~ ~~(Bismarck was still a moral outcast to them.)~~

When Bernstorff became so pressing, he discovered that the cautious Lord Stanley could on occasion be remarkably definite. Britain would certainly not join Prussia, he was told, nor enter on a continental war unless the neutrality of Belgium were violated. As Belgium had lately been preparing

~~(19)~~ As already stated, Salisbury had resigned before the crisis was fully developed, but his influence must have played some part in determining the general attitude of the Government towards the Luxembourg scheme.

to fight on the side of France, the significance of this remark was obvious. ⁽²⁰⁾ It was clear that Prussia must abandon hope of sheltering herself behind Britain. In the meantime, however, Bismarck's actions were making their impression abroad, and next day (April 4th) Holland decided to adopt a "safety first" policy, and withdraw from the Luxembourg arrangement. 69.

War now seemed imminent; and all those anxious to prevent it came forward with their plans to save the situation. The danger, however, was less real than apparent. For Bismarck's plans had received a rude check from the conduct of Great Britain.

The view ⁵ had been put forward that Bismarck was sincere in his promises to allow the annexation of Luxembourg, and that it was owing to the mismanagement of Napoleon that the scheme fell through. Napoleon, it has been said, should have presented Bismarck with a fait accompli, and the latter would then have persuaded Germany to consent and allowed the matter to pass over quietly. As it was, Napoleon allowed public opinion in Germany to become excited before the scheme was actually carried out, and Bismarck was obliged to give in to popular feeling. 70

There are several objections to this view. For one thing, Napoleon did ~~(his best to)~~ offer a fait accompli for Bismarck's acceptance: the consent of Holland ^{had} ~~was~~ actually ^{been} given when the scheme was made public. If knowledge of the matter had been spread before and roused ill-feeling in Germany, the leakage took place in Prussia, not in France---so even the upholders of 71

(20) F.O. Prussia, 615. Slatery to Lofus. 3. April 1847

this belief admit. And leakages in the Prussian Foreign Office did not take place without permission from Bismarck. Secondly, Bismarck was not usually so deferential to public opinion as he was on this occasion. He had already made two wars in opposition to that opinion, and he was quite capable of keeping peace in opposition to it if he had so desired. Thirdly, he could easily have put a stop to the scheme, by putting pressure on Holland, before it was made public, and as soon as he saw that feeling in Germany was against it, and so avoided a crisis; 72 and yet he preferred to allow the scheme to be completed and published, and then suddenly vetoed it. Fourthly, why should Bismarck have ever wished to give Luxembourg to France? The general verdict of posterity, in accordance with Bismarck's confessions, is that he was determined to fight France sooner or later: but he was also anxious to make France appear to provoke the predestined war; and by giving Luxembourg to France, he would have practically insured peace. Napoleon, once satisfied and with something tangible to show for his pains, was not at all likely to rush into war with Prussia for the fun of the thing. 73

If Bismarck wanted war with France in the future why did he take the very step that would make the disposition of France more peaceful? If, on the other hand, we grant that he did mean to give Luxembourg to France, for some unknown reason, possibly to postpone war for a year, then why, when obliged to give up the scheme, did he deliberately choose to thwart Napoleon in

the most irritating and publicly insulting manner, when he could have settled the affair comparatively quietly?

There is considerable evidence that Bismarck never meant for a moment to allow the annexation of Luxembourg; and that he of set purpose allowed the crisis to develop, with the intention of driving France into a declaration of war, and making a Franco-Prussian war in 1867 instead of 1870. 74.

The great statesman not only seizes opportunity, but makes his own opportunities. From 1866 to 1870 Bismarck kept France in a perpetual state of irritation. His plan was to stir the pot and keep it boiling, so that at any given moment he might be able to precipitate a catastrophe. Throughout the whole period Europe passed through a continual series of minor crises, any one of which, with skilful management, could have been developed until it gave occasion for war. Only in no case did circumstances seem sufficiently propitious, and no crisis was allowed to mature. 75

Of these crises, the one which came nearest to ending in war was the Luxembourg Incident: and it is probable that Bismarck's first intention was that it should do so. He did not mean merely to irritate France, but to drive her to declare war at once. This intention was only abandoned because Bismarck found that public opinion, especially in Britain, was too strongly against him. He wished, in going to war, to appear as the injured party, not as the aggressor; this he did successfully in 1870, but in 1867 he found that it was impossible. 76

He found that he had gone too far, and he withdrew, with the greatest skill, cleverly turning the affair to his own advantage, but not pushing France to the verge of war. The disposition of the French Government was sufficiently peace^{able} ~~ful~~ to make it possible for him to do this.

If he did not mean to make a war in 1867, then in proceeding 77. in a fashion deliberately irritating to France he entered a singularly dangerous course. The acquisition of Luxembourg was not popular in France: but by exposing Napoleon to his people in a position so humiliating, when he was already unpopular and distrusted, and felt his throne insecure, there was considerable risk of a revolution, which would deprive Napoleon of his throne, and introduce a government, whether Republican, Orleanist or Legitimate, that would have few of Napoleon's motives for war, and would even be to some extent pledged to a peace policy. Such a change was the last that Bismarck could desire, 78. but either that or immediate war was the likeliest result of his policy.

In his own Memoirs, Bismarck says that he was anxious to postpone war until Prussia's preparations were made, and that even in 1867 they were not quite completed. He makes, however, so many statements that are known to be false, apparently with the intention of misleading his readers, that a direct assertion of this kind is always open to suspicion. There is also the fact to be taken into account, that Prussia had almost 1,200,000 men 79. ready for immediate service, and that France, who had only 150,000 available men in '66 had even now no more than 400,000. ~~Let~~ Moltke had ~~substantiated~~ a victory over France in 1866, while Prussia was still technically at war with Austria.

~~Signed with Bismarck~~
(1) A. Denis "Fondation de l'Empire Allemagne." Sybel VI.

Moltke
 himself wrote at the time:

"The Luxembourg Question will hardly lead to war just at present. Louis Napoleon must be aware that he is not prepared for it; but he cannot say so to his vain Frenchmen; public opinion is much excited in Paris, fomented by party-spirit, and an explosion is not impossible. Nothing could be better for us than that that war, which is bound to come, should be declared at once, while Austria is, in all probability, engaged in the

80

(21-)
 East."

(21-) Moltke to his brother Adolf, May 1867. Moltke I. *Italics mine.*

The most serious objection to the view that Bismarck meant war in 1867 is that he was still occupied in framing the North German Constitution. It is possible, however, that he may have hoped the Constitution would be finished earlier; or that the crisis came slightly sooner than he had anticipated; or even that he may have thought of finishing a Constitution for a united Germany when the war was over. Besides, Bismarck even in his most reckless moments, was always preparing for every alternative.

81.

~~(As to the question, whether Prussia was ready for a French war in 1867, it must be remembered that Moltke had guaranteed a victory over France in 1866, before peace was signed with Austria. It would very possibly have been better for France to fight in 1867 than in 1870, but on the other hand, it could not be to Bismarck's advantage to postpone the war too long.) Moltke~~

Again, what reason could there be for driving Holland and Belgium out of their wits with fear, by the consistent course of threats and bullying pursued by Bismarck towards those countries for the few months preceding the crisis? The explanation offered by Napoleon ^{To Cowley} is rather too thin, and in any case it does not apply to Belgium. But why, it may be asked, should Bismarck ~~he~~ have terrified and irritated the two buffer states if he intended to make war on France? Should he not rather have propitiated them? Bismarck, however, preferred to rule by fear rather than by love. He probably believed that he could frighten them into doing what he wished. He may even have hoped to

(1) ~~Letter of Adolf von Moltke, May, 1867. Italics mine. Litten I~~

scare Belgium into acquiescing in the use of her eastern railways by Prussia, and hoped that this would induce France to attack Belgium, which would bring Britain into the field against France. Bismarck would have given a great deal to have Britain on his side, and he would only have demanded a very small degree of assistance from her. He did not want British troops; but one naval squadron would have been of inestimable service to him in defending German commerce from the French Navy. It was only at sea that he feared France. 83.

It must be confessed that Belgium and Holland were singularly unpromising subjects for such a policy. Both the Dutch and the Belgian Netherlands have throughout their history shown a remarkable obstinacy in defending their rights, and an equally strong resentment of any attempt to bully them. The people which had singlehanded faced ^{first} Spain and ^{then} France when those countries were at the zenith of their power were not likely to be intimidated by Prussia. It has already been shown that after a course of treatment from Bismarck, both these states were 84. arming against Prussia.

After studying the course of Prussian policy from 1863 to 1866, one becomes so deeply impressed by the genius of Bismarck, that one is almost inclined to attribute to him exceptional powers and believe that he could not be mistaken, and that the view of his policy just expressed must be false. But in considering his conduct towards Belgium and Holland at this moment, two facts must be remembered: first, that Bismarck was a born

(8) See the curious story, F.O. Prussia, 619, of Bismarck's proposal to hire a fleet from the United States. Letter to F.O. 27 April 1867
Do. 4 May 1867, F.O. Prussia, 619.

bully; and secondly, that at this time he was in a very dangerous condition of nervous excitement. 85.

Some years later Sir Charles Dilke in a spirited if not very refined passage, reminded his countrymen that Count Bismarck's digestion and Count Bismarck's neuralgia were matters of the most serious significance for Europe. Bismarck, was, in fact, anything but ["]the man of iron" which he has been termed. He was not a cold-blooded and cold-hearted superman; but a rather exceptionally nervous, warm-hearted and passionate man. One may say that he had what is known as "the artistic temperament", not usually considered a desirable gift. His unerring eye for the dramatic element of a situation, which made him so successful a liar; his understanding of the character of others, which gave him his adaptability and his charm; the striking and picturesque language in which he naturally expressed himself; above all, the facts of his life---his wild and stormy youth, his stern manhood; his romantic passion for his wife; his romantic passion for his country: all these are indications of a poetic and imaginative mind. No man, and much less a man of this type, could go through the strain of the last four years without serious suffering; and the crisis had come in 1866. There is no need to doubt the essential truth (though the dates, etc., were falsified) of the picturesque details with which he himself has embroidered the story of that time--- the hysterical burst of tears at the council of war, the vow to "die in the last charge," and so on. Throughout 86. 87.

that year Bismarck had been playing, single-handed, a game that meant life or death both for himself and for Germany. It must never be forgotten, too, that besides directing the affairs of Europe, he had to direct the conduct of the King of Prussia; throughout all the crisis, his high plans were at the mercy of the whims of a silly and obstinate old man. Bismarck was like one ^{trying} to drive a railway train and a donkey simultaneously. ~~And now that~~ ^{When} the game was over and won, he was on the very verge of collapse---of what we should nowadays call a "nervous breakdown". He gave vent to his nervous agitation by smashing the furniture and storming at his subordinates, but, as he wished at present to conciliate the Liberals, he was obliged to be courteous and amiable in his dealings with the Reichstag. In autumn he fell seriously ill, and immediately on his recovery fell to the arduous work of creating a Constitution for the new Confederation, on which he was still working. It is small wonder if for a moment his finger on the pulse of Europe slackened, and his keen eye was momentarily dimmed, and that he began to bully Holland and Belgium into doing what he wished, just as he bullied his subordinates, and as he afterwards bullied his Emperor, and his fellows, the Prime Ministers of Europe. But conduct which was well enough at the Congress of Berlin was as yet out of place in 1867. He had not sufficiently taken into account the change of Ministry in Great Britain. He awoke to the fact that he had made a false step, and he retrieved it with his own unequalled skill.

He continued to protest with the utmost energy that he could never withdraw the Prussian garrison or consent to sever the connection between Luxembourg and Germany: but at the same time he dropped the magic word "Conference", always a ^{tempting} ~~certain~~ bait for a British Government; and that Government speedily took up the proposal.

Both France and Holland were bitterly complaining of the way they had been deceived; but both contented themselves with complaints. Napoleon, indeed, had on April 4th informed the Prussian Ambassador "that a refusal on the part of Prussia to sanction the annexation and to evacuate the fortress of Luxembourg must lead to war... Stating that his own existence in France would be imperilled if he were to submit to such a rebuff". ⁽²³⁾ ~~He~~ ... but the statement was probably made in ^{a moment of excitement,} ~~fear~~ and his courage failed him. The fact that it was Holland, ^{that} ~~(though owing to Prussian threats,)~~ who withdrew from the arrangement, gave him a loophole through which to escape, and on 8th April he told Lord Cowley that "he had heard that Prussia had applied to the Powers and he would be delighted to accept any honourable suggestion made by the Powers. He would be satisfied if the garrison were withdrawn and the fortress returned to the Grand Duke." ⁽²⁴⁾ ~~He~~

In the meantime Bismarck was excusing himself to the Emperor by saying "that all his good intentions had been frustrated by the manner in which the King of Holland's intentions

(P.O. France, 1659.

Cowley to F.O. April 5. 1867

(24) ~~He~~

Cowley to F.O. 8 April 1867.

F.O. France, 1659.

had been made known at Berlin"---they should have been made to himself, not to the King. ⁽²⁵⁾ ~~("It seems impossible to acquit Bismarck of having wittingly or unwittingly led the French Government into error", was the judgment of Lord Cowley on this point.)~~

Bismarck, however, had not altogether given up hope of having his way. He continued to protest that it would be dishonourable for Prussia even to consent to withdraw the garrison; and he endeavoured to convince the British Government that France had merely brought forward the question as a pretext for war. In order to frighten them he suggested that he might, in self-defence, have to form an alliance with France and bribe her with Belgium to leave him alone, ~~as~~ "a guarantee was in these days of little value"---an obvious attempt to draw Lord Stanley. "The conclusion which I drew from Count Bismarck's conversation" wrote Loftus "is that he fully believes that war is intended by France, and that the Luxembourg question is but the pretext put forward On the other hand, it was evident to me that Count Bismarck would equally engage to defend the existence of Belgium under all circumstances if in return Great Britain should make common cause with Germany in a defensive war against France." ⁽²⁶⁾ It will be seen that if the government had all been Loftuses Bismarck's machinations might have obtained more success.

⁽²⁵⁾ F.O. France, 1659,
Cowley to F.O. 5 April 1867

(26) F.O. Prussia, 619.

Loftus to F.O. 13 April 1867.

101 He next began the dangerous process of protesting that France was arming against him, and declaring that he must mobilise if she did not cease ---a course, this, that almost invariably ends in war. At the same time he declared that he could not promise to be bound by the decisions of the Conference, and that he would not permit a full discussion of the question by the conferring Powers: but these measures also failed. Stanley, immediately ^{telegraphed} ~~wired~~ that if Prussia would not consent to this, Great Britain would refuse a Conference altogether. As no response whatever had been made to his threats and promises about Belgium, Bismarck judged it best to give way. On 27th April both Prussia and France gave full and free consent to a Conference on the basis of the neutralisation of the Duchy---a measure proposed by Britain with the knowledge of France. (27) ~~11~~

Austria was anxious that France should come well out of the affair. Beust had proposed to Britain a renewal of the old alliance between the two countries, and though he had said Austria would be neutral in case of war, his conduct had been rather suspicious. He had refused to guarantee to Bavaria, when that state asked him, that he would not attack her in the

Stanley to Beust 27 April 1867.
F.O. Prussia, 615. A proposal by Austria to give Luxembourg to Belgium, and a bit of Belgium to France, had been blocked by the opposition of the Belgian parliament, as the territorial integrity of the country was a part of the constitution. (F.O. Belgium, 275). According to Beust the offer was refused because the compensation offered to Belgium was not large enough. (Memoirs, 111)

Beust, II pp. 24 ff.

90.
 rear if she joined North Germany in the war; also he had
 asked whether Britain would be neutral even if Russia, according
 to her agreement to Prussia, attacked Turkey when war broke out? (18.) ~~11~~
 Bloomfield's reply, that Britain would certainly be neutral, and
 that the French fleet in the Baltic would counteract any
 attempt of Russia, had drawn upon him a reproof from Lord Stanley
 for its indiscretion. It is, however, interesting to note that
 an experienced diplomat as late as 1867 believed that France
 single-handed could keep both Russia and Prussia in check, and is
 an example of the exaggerated belief of many Englishmen in the
 power of Napoleon. 98

When the Conference met, therefore, Bismarck found no ^{support} ~~one~~,
^{perhaps from} save ~~to some extent~~ Russia, ~~(who did not incline to the side~~
~~of France in the question)~~ His strength, however, lay in the wish
 of all parties to preserve peace. (He had, from the moment of
 entering the Conference, given up the idea of driving France into
 a declaration of war; it was too clear that public opinion was
 definitely against Prussia. But he was determined to reap
 every possible advantage from the situation, and to prevent
 France from making any real gain. He had paved the way by
 his bluster of the last few weeks. He had dinned into the
 ears of Europe that Prussia could never consent to sever her
 connection with Luxembourg or to withdraw her troops, until he
 had worried them into forgetting that there was no real connec-
 tion between Luxembourg and Germany, and that the presence of

99
 F.O. Austria, 720.2 Bloomfield to F.O. 23. April 1867.
 Do 26 April 1867.

Prussian troops in the fortress had no legal authority whatever. He had ~~really~~ succeeded in hypnotising most of his contemporaries into believing that the withdrawal of the garrison, which was really an obligation, was a concession. According to the idea of Bismarck, France should give up all claim on Luxembourg, and Prussia would generously consent to withdraw her troops: but he demanded still more than this. 150

The Conference had met on the basis of the neutralisation of the Duchy: but Bismarck demanded more than mere neutralisation: he demanded a European guarantee. The British Government were extremely unwilling to contract any new obligations of this kind, and would have preferred an article such as that in the Ionian Islands Treaty rather than a guarantee like that of the Belgian Treaty of 1839: but this was not enough to satisfy Bismarck, and on the 7th of May he announced that unless the Conference "showed certain prospect of peace" the Prussian army would mobilise. (29) ~~III~~ These "certain prospects" were understood to mean the guarantee, and as these demands were supported by Russia, the British Government unwillingly gave in rather than risk the almost certain outbreak of war which a Prussian mobilisation meant. In addition to this, Bismarck insisted that the Treaty should be so drawn up as to make it perfectly clear that the withdrawal of the troops was the result, and not the cause, of the signing of the general guarantee, thus making it appear that Prussia had done this rather as a matter of 102

(29)

F.O.

Prussia, 620.

Letter to F.O. 7 May 1867.

personal convenience than as a concession to France or in deference to the will of Europe. This was the article most unpalatable to Napoleon, but having gone so far, he was obliged to give his consent.

Bismarck thus succeeded in wresting a triumph from what might have been, under management less skilful, a rather unpleasant reverse for Prussia. He had made a mistake, but he had retraced his steps so cleverly that he had neither entered upon a war in circumstances favourable to France nor appeared to make the slightest concession in favour of that country. 103

On one point, however, he was to receive a disappointment. The Luxembourg guarantee was not received with approval in England, and Lord Stanley lost his head during a debate in Parliament and practically repudiated the guarantee which he had just signed. ^{here, therefore} Even ~~on this point~~ Bismarck had not obtained complete success, and he was furious with the Conservative Government.

The signing of the guarantee, and the subsequent denial, did that Government some harm at home; the Opposition accused them of blundering and uncertainty, and of contracting responsibilities which they had not the courage to fulfil. Lord Stanley's and Derby's speeches certainly laid the Government open to this accusation: but this estimate of their policy was not a fair one. 104
It has been shown that that policy was crowned with considerable success: and that it was in a large degree owing to the conduct

of Great Britain that a war did not break out in 1867. Had the Liberal Government been in power, and had they continued the policy which they had pursued towards France for some time past, Great Britain would have looked with jealousy upon the acquisition of Luxembourg by France, and would probably have given moral support to the actions of Bismarck in order to prevent this. They would not have been persuaded into joining in the war on the side of Prussia; but it must be remembered that it was largely sympathy shown to France, and the extreme coldness shown to Prussia, by the British Government, which moderated the conduct of Bismarck, and which enabled Napoleon to make the large concessions which he did. Had Great Britain showed even a benevolent neutrality towards Prussia, Bismarck would have been encouraged to carry out his policy of hectoring France to the point of desperation, and ~~would have been able to force~~ Napoleon into a declaration of war either by refusing the Conference, or by refusing to accept its decisions.

105

106.

~~The conduct of the whole affair by the Government was un-~~

If Great Britain had come with some credit out of the affair, France, on the other hand, had suffered a lamentable loss of prestige: and in so far had the policy of Britain failed and that of Prussia succeeded. Though Napoleon really deserved some credit for ^{the} wish to preserve peace shown in the latter part of the negotiations, his conduct to outsiders and to his own subjects naturally appeared rather in the light of pusillanimity, for he had begun with confidence, passed to bluster, and ended in concession and retreat. ~~The affair had been thoroughly humiliating for France: Napoleon had appeared in the light of a greedy pup snapping at a bone, and being contemptuously ordered to heel by its master.~~ He had undertaken the enterprise in ^{order} ~~(an effort)~~ to restore his popularity in France and his prestige in Europe, and in both ^{objects} he had failed. It seemed ^{not} ~~almost~~ likely that the Luxembourg Incident would be to the Second Empire what the Spanish Marriage ^s had been to the House of Orleans.

107

Unfortunately for Napoleon, the affair was rapidly followed by a series of ~~(lesser)~~ humiliations and losses.

The first was the news from America of the tragic fall of the Emperor Maximilian ~~(-- a tragedy which seemed to the French nation to dishonour them in the eyes of Europe, and, what was even more serious for Napoleon)~~ which cast a shade over the amicable relations which ^{Napoleon} he was eager to preserve with Austria.

108

^{Som after} In July the folly of the French government laid them open to another snub from Prussia. It had been obvious for some

time that the clause of the Treaty of Prague relative to the retrocession of the Danish part of Slesvig would never be carried out. ~~(by Prussia)~~ Bismarck had continually postponed it, on the most frivolous of excuses. Now the ~~(famous)~~ visit of the King of Prussia to Paris had been arranged, and it was desirable that His Majesty should be able to say that negotiations were in progress. Bismarck therefore made a show of entering upon the business with the Danish government. He suggested to them that he should guarantee their integrity, and when they refused this with words to the effect that what was fun to Prussia was death to Denmark, he began to bewilder them with a whole series of rapidly succeeding and contradictory declarations. He first announced that the Treaty of Prague imposed no obligation to cede to Denmark a single person who preferred to remain German---thus if in one village on the Jutland border there lived a single German grocer, special arrangements must be made by which that grocer remained a German citizen, and was fully protected by the German government: ~~(11)~~ then he said he wanted "guarantees", but refused to state what guarantees, what was to be guaranteed, or who was to guarantee it: Denmark had had all the guarantees she wanted, and she said that she would rather do without the territory than take it if Germany were given any rights of any nature whatsoever over it or its inhabitants. The Danes ^{also} objected to the

system of German enclaves which was Bismarck's next suggestion, and he thereupon declared that he would never consent to return either Düppel or Alsen; both purely Danish districts, but important as positions of defence for Prussia. The proposed negotiations then came to a premature end, because Denmark would not begin until she had heard what the frontier was to be, and Bismarck absolutely refused to make any statement about it. In the meantime the elections were held, and the result in N. Slesvig was an overwhelming Danish majority. Both members elected there were Danes, and both refused to take the oath of allegiance to Prussia. The Prussian government ~~(then)~~ put in some skilful jerrymandering by which the electoral districts became remarkably writthen, lean and long in shape, but which secured a return of one German candidate at the next election, which was immediately held. Prussia then proclaimed to all the world that N. Slesvig was really German, and that the few Danes who lived there were already reconciled to German rule. 112.

Great Britain was invited, both by Denmark and by France, to hint to Prussia that it would be wise to carry out the Treaty of Prague. The Conservative Government, however, refused. The Danish affair had been a dirty business, and they did not want to get into a similar scrape themselves. They said that they had not signed the Treaty of Prague and that they washed their hands of the whole affair. 113.

It would have been well for Napoleon if he had followed their example: but he or his advisers were possessed with a spirit of folly. In July the redoubtable Benedetti received orders to remonstrate with Count Bismarck. The despatch unfortunately found its way into the newspaper. Bismarck regarded the interference as an unwarrantable impertinence, and Napoleon was obliged to withdraw with an apology. It was declared that the despatch was not an official communication, but merely an affectionate offer of advice, as from one private individual to another. Benedetti said he had never read the despatch officially; Thile, who had received it, said he had. France was once more publicly rebuked, and Bismarck bitterly complained to Britain that France was always trying to start European crises. But Stanley was now getting a little tired of Bismarck's wailings, and he tartly replied that Prussia's determination to take offence at whatever France did was still more likely to produce war. 114

In the meantime an event of the happiest augury for Franco-British affairs had taken place: Lord Cowley had resigned, and had been succeeded by Lord Lyons. It is to be regretted that the event did not take place sooner; had it been longer delayed, it is possible that Great Britain might have found herself involved in France within the next few years. 115

Lord Lyons was not a great ambassador in the sense that Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was great. He was not the man to originate a policy, and, by the strength of his personality and the

~~1) F.O. Prussia, 615.~~

(30) Stanley to Lyons, 5th August 1867, F.O. Prussia, 615.

power of his intelligence, impose it upon the home government and carry it to success. He would probably have been too lazy to enter upon such a course, even if his nature had not been one whose peculiar excellence lay rather in the power to observe, to interpret, and to improve, rather than to invent and create. Besides this, his strong sense of duty ^{led him to} regarded himself as ^{merely} the mouthpiece of his government, and he was always careful not to go beyond his instructions or to allow his personal views to modify them. Lord Lyons may indeed almost be regarded as the ideal ambassador. ~~A vague and superficial cynicism only served to increase his natural tolerance and to prevent any harsh judgments, and it was united to an unfailing sense of humour and a degree of sympathetic understanding.~~ Lord Lyons ^{He} was never irritated, never angry, never impatient; he never quarrelled, he never blustered, he never threatened. He was always popular with the ministers to whose courts he was accredited and with his colleagues of the Corps Diplomatique; his subordinates were devoted to him; his government reposed in him a degree of trust almost unparalleled, and not always welcome to himself. The most raw and uncourteous admonition from London, when conveyed by the suave and tactful tongue of Lord Lyons, lost its unpleasantness. He owed his success ~~not to~~ ^{and a sense of humour.} superiority of intellect and energy so much as to gentleness and generosity. At this time most of the British ambassadors to the great powers were on bad terms with the ministers with whom they transacted affairs: the relations of Bismarck and Lord Augustus Loftus were compounded of a mutual dislike and contempt; Sir Andrew Buchanan could not interview Prince Gortschakov without squabbling with him; and Lord Cowley since 1860 had distrusted all French statesmen.

In Lord Cowley's letters there is never a friendly opinion, in Lord Lyons' never a harsh judgment. As characteristic of the two one may refer to their relations with M. de Moustier, a brilliant diplomat whose services France lost too soon. He succeeded M. Drouyn de Lhuys in 1866, and Lord Cowley thus reported of him: "I should say a worse choice could hardly have been made. Very capable but very indolent...acting on his first judgment without reflection---of a violent temper---obstinate...and rather treating opinions contrary to his own with raillery than meeting them by argument...His character is not, morally speaking, of the purest, though he is fascinating and amiable in society." Lord Lyons, throughout Moustier's term of office, was on terms of untroubled friendliness with the objectionable minister. ~~(It was unfortunate that he had not sooner replaced the priggish, narrow-minded, and intolerant diplomatist who represented Great Britain at Paris in the critical years 1860-67.)~~ (30.)

Moustier, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, was pre-occupied with the Eastern question, and the affairs of Luxembourg and Denmark had been to him, ^{largely} ~~(to a great extent)~~, a distraction from a policy much nearer his heart. Not even now, however, did he find opportunity to deal with Eastern affairs, for fresh trouble for France broke out in Italy. In November 1867 Garibaldi made his unhappy attempt on Rome, and the credit of the French military success was quite discounted by the fact that it was a success against Italy. Napoleon made an attempt to solve the difficulty by suggesting a European Conference on papal affairs. Italy, Austria, and Russia, accepted the invit-

F.O. France. 16522 Cowley to F.O. 2 Sept. 1866. ✓

ation, but the proposal was blocked by Great Britain and Prussia, who came to an understanding, and refused to take part in such a Conference. Bismarck had every reason to wish that the situation in Italy might remain unchanged, for, as long as it lasted, ill-feeling between that country and France was bound to grow; he did not trust Victor ^Emanuel, whose attachment to France he knew, ⁽³²⁾ and one of his objects was to prevent a Franco-Italian alliance. The revolutionary leaders ⁽³³⁾ had asked his assistance against France, and he had refused, fearing that, even if Victor Emmanuel could be lured into war against France, he would soon change sides and join France against Prussia. Britain, on her side, was alarmed at the possibility of being drawn into some collective guarantee of the papal power in Rome, or of authorising the French garrison there. Napoleon ^(of course) wanted to get out of Rome, and was desperately seeking for some excuse for doing so without giving offence to the Ultramontanes. He was no fool, and he knew that in the end Rome must fall to Italy. He wished well to Italy---in this dreary hour the only work of his hands that showed signs of enduring success. If he could withdraw his troops, as a graceful concession to the rest of Europe, and get some sort of guarantee signed, which would last a year or two, he would not have cared whether it was permanently fulfilled or not. He only wanted to shift his responsibility to someone else's shoulders. The British government did not under-

⁽³²⁾ "M. de Bismarck est sans doute convaincu que si la conférence ne se réunit pas, nous devons continuer à occuper un point quelconque du territoire romain, et la présence de nos troupes dans les États pontificaux le garantit contre le rétablissement des rapports qui unissaient autrefois la France et l'Italie." (Benedetti to Moustier, 17.11.67. Benedetti, p. 240.)

⁽³³⁾ Sybel Vol. 6. ⁽³⁴⁾ Ratazzi, when minister, apparently made similar proposals.

stand this, and Bismarck increased their fears, now assuring them that Napoleon wanted the French occupation of Rome authorised, and now hinting that France wanted to break up the new-made state, ^{to} ~~and annex Savoy~~ ^{Redmont}, and possibly Genoa, and ^{to} restore the Kingdom of Naples. Rouher lessened the chances of French success by ^{foolish} ~~an unwise and exaggerated~~ speech in the Chambers; He had been secretly informed of Katazzi's underhand dealings with Bismarck, and roundly declared that Italy should ~~never~~ have Rome.

The failure of the plan for a Conference was a blow, but in spite of this it seemed as if Bismarck's fears regarding an Italian-French rapprochement might be realised. The Italian alliance with Prussia had always been an affair of expediency; the king and some of his ministers still had some gratitude and affection for France. They could not but see, that even if France stood between them and Rome, she was the only country that had fought, or ever would fight, in their cause. Prussia had used Italy, Britain had sympathised with her and applauded her: but if Austria should try to get back her lost provinces, neither Prussia nor Britain would spend a man or a shot in Italy's defence; only from France could they ^{expect} ~~hope~~ for help, and they could not hope to stand alone against Austria. Considerable feeling had been roused against Prussia by La Marmora's revelations of her conduct to her ally in 1866. Those men, therefore, who preferred

(1) He told Loftus that he had information of Ultramontane plots, and said, "It was at all events remarkable that the reports from both Florence and Rome tended to the same point, namely to the restoration of the Bourbons at Naples and an augmentation of the Papal States. These intrigues were, he said, attributed by some to Prince Napoleon, by others to the Ultra-Catholic party in France which since the affair of Mentana had considerably raised its pretensions, and wd. not see with disfavour a religious war in Europe in which they hoped to be victorious." Loftus to Stanley, 18.1.68. F.O. Prussia. 637.
(2) See above, p. .

the policy of Cavour to that of Mazzini and Garibaldi---Menabrea, la Marmora, and others---still hoped for a reconciliation with France. Hence the proposal, in June 1868, for an offensive and defensive alliance, in which Austria was to be invited to join, which was to be directed (~~in reality~~) against Prussia, and which demanded only the evacuation of Rome as a condition.

The offer was tempting. The Luxembourg Incident had shown that war with Prussia was a very real and threatening danger, and France was in little case to go to war. Some attempt at re-forming her army had been made, and since 1866 the numbers had been increased, but even now the efficient force was equal to little more than half that of Prussia, who could put into the field in three weeks more than a million men. Marshal Niel drew up an elaborate scheme of military reorganisation, and an attempt was made, at the beginning of 1868, to carry this out.

The negotiations with Italy were unknown to the British government, but Niel's army schemes were public property, and together with the incomplete improvements that had already been

(36) The reports of Mr E. Herries, chargé d'affaires in Italy, for 4th September of this year, show that there were vague suspicions, and show also the cross-currents of opinion in the Italian cabinet. "There came to my recollection a remarkably strong declaration of a determination to remain neutral in the event of a war between France and Prussia which was made to me last year by M. Ratazzi...in answer to a casual observation on my part as to the advantageous geographical position of Italy that would always enable her to hold aloof from a contest in Central Europe--and I made a similar remark to Count Menabrea, but without eliciting a similar reply. H.E. merely said in a somewhat constrained and hesitating manner, "Nous sommes pacifiques." Herries then asked what was their attitude about Rome? "Count Menabrea replied that they did not know what to expect as they received assurances one day that were contradicted the next. He spoke vaguely and showed no disposition to give information." Barbolani later told Herries that affairs with France were in an unsatisfactory state. Both said "some violent change" might be expected in France at any moment, and Barbolani thought they were holding onto Rome so as to prevent Italy going against them in case of war. (F.O. Italy, 128.)

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made, they threw into a panic colonel Claremont, British military attaché at Paris. Rumours of war, probably started by vague reports of Italy's proposals, were in the air, and as the British government were ~~convinced that the~~ French army was the most efficient in Europe, they concluded that, ^{since} ~~as~~ it was already in a state of perfection, a proposed increase of numbers and armaments could only mean that an immediate campaign was in contemplation. A somewhat entertaining correspondence ensued---a series of highly-coloured despatches from Claremont, expressed in his usual romantic and picturesque style, (and) each coupled with a companion letter from Lyons, who, while treating his subordinates' opinions with full respect, contrived to soothe the fears that they might excite in Downing Street.

"The language of the French ministers is extremely pacific," wrote Lyons, on March 3rd, "And their present policy, especially with regard to the Turkish question, appears to be founded on the supposition that peace in Europe will be preserved at least for this year," though he added that there were rumours about the secret intentions of the Emperor which "merited serious attention." Claremont definitely asserted that there would be war this year, though he remarked that he ^{had} ~~has~~ taken special care not to alarm his Prussian colleague"---a tenderness which was

(36) But possibly there was no connection, for Claremont wrote, "He (Niel) evidently thinks that in the present state of feeling in Italy she would in the event of hostilities take part with Germany and he wants to be able to threaten Florence from Rome rather than from the side of the Alps." (6.2.68. F.O. France, 1701.)

(37) F.O. France, 1703. Lyons to F.O. 31. March 1868. ✓
(38) Claremont to Lyons, 7.4.68.
Apr 1868. F.O. France, 1703.

perhaps superfluous. Later, after another agitated report from Claremont, Lyons wrote, "Colonel Claremont's report is certainly calculated to cause most serious apprehension, and I have nothing to allege on the other side except the pacific declarations of M. de Moustier, and the principal civil members of the cabinet

I do not doubt that these declarations are sincere, or that they are sanctioned by the Emperor; but whatever may be His Majesty's present views, little confidence appears to be felt in his steadiness in pursuing a pacific policy. He frequently changes his own mind, and it is believed that he may be overborne by the war party in the Army and navy.---While material preparations for war are proceeding rapidly, no sign is yet visible of any preparation for fixing a quarrel upon Prussia. The question to be taken up as a moral ground for war has yet to be sought. This is not however accepted as a reassuring circumstance..." The Prussian government have lately referred to military preparations going on. "The most pacific assurances have been given by the representatives of France, and have been accepted by Count Bismarck and M. de Goltz---but while accepting these assurances and declaring their own personal confidence in them, M. de Bismarck and M. de Goltz have not concealed their belief that this confidence is shared by few of their countrymen." Lord Lyons, who had early mastered a fact never fully understood by Lord Cowley, also remarked that it was not "by any means certain that His Majesty would confide his intentions to his ministers."

In his private letters, however, Lyons spoke much more confidently. He had seen Prince Napoleon, who had just returned from

Amiel Amiel
F.O. France, 1704, Lyons to Granville, 28.4.68, 7.4.68.

a visit to ^{Berlin} ~~Germany~~ strongly convinced of the necessity for peace. He had been deeply impressed by the strength of ^{Prussia} ~~Germany~~, and was sure that she had an understanding with Russia. If France meant to fight Prussia, it was "now or never", for Prussia was growing stronger every day, but he himself thought "never" should be the decision. (1) (40)

While in Germany, the prince had called on Lord Augustus Loftus, and had spoken in a tone of alarm and depression, but not one that implied France was thinking of immediate war. He hinted that by-gones should be by-gones, and that France would not put forward another claim for compensation, unless Germany made a new advance. The progress of Prussia, he said, up till now, was a fait accompli. If it continued, that was different. "Can France ---can Europe---look quietly on and witness passively this absorbing process without requiring some guarantees as to the limits which shall constitute Germany? What would Europe say if France were to enter into a similar Zollverein Treaty with Belgium---and that Belgian representatives should sit in a parliament assembled at Paris? Why---they would instantly raise their voice against the absorption of Belgium and the cessation of her existence as an independent state." (Are all the Austrian German provinces, he demanded, are the Russian German provinces of the Baltic, to be united to Prussia on grounds of nationality? who can tell whether Germany may not revive a historical claim to

(1) See Lyons, I, Chap. 6.

(2) Prussia had just renewed the Zollverein treaties with the South German states, and had established a parliament for economic affairs, in which members from all parts of Germany, elected by universal suffrage, met at Berlin.

Alsace and Lorraine? It was, of course, too late to check the triumphant progress of Prussia in Germany. "If Southern Germany is still to follow in the wake, I again say, let it be so, but what concessions will Germany or Prussia be prepared to make for this boon? If the system of absorption is to be passively permitted by Europe why should not others absorb likewise? You, England, said His Imperial Highness, have chosen to withdraw yourselves from the Policy of Europe, and this abstention of England from active participations in European politics is a great misfortune for herself. You pretend to abstain from interfering in European affairs except on questions which directly affect your interests, but is not this a question which directly affects the well-being and peace of Europe---and must it not consequently concern the interests of your country?... There are two points where England still holds a watchful and careful eye---namely---Belgium and Constantinople. If an idea is ever mooted which could ever menace the independence of Belgium, you, England, immediately raise your voice---If Russia discloses any secret designs on Constantinople you again raise a cry of alarm---but as regards the changes brought about, and in operation, in Germany, you are apparently apathetic and foresee no danger likely to affect your interests. The present state of things is intolerable and cannot last,---for there is no basis for International Law. Treaties are no sooner signed than they are violated---old landmarks have been torn down and no fixed ones have taken their place---there is consequently nothing but confusion and insecurity and the result must necessarily be some great catastrophe, which, if the statesmen of Europe had foresight and

courage, might be avoided. If they continue in their present apathy, they will be awakened some morning by a 'coup de tonnerre!' Let Germany be constituted, said His Imperial Highness, but let its limits be fixed and final so that it may not be led to aspire after future aggrandisement, and let the arrangement concluded be placed under ~~an~~ ^(sic) European guarantee. If you, England, (continued the prince) remain in your present state of abstention from European affairs, you will some day see that Russia will profit of ^(sic) the moment, when we shall be otherwise engaged, to seize Constantinople---and having obtained her prize will leave Prussia in the lurch. To us, in such a moment, the Eastern Question will be of secondary consequence in comparison with our interests nearer home. How ~~will~~ ^{will} you be able single-handed to oppose Russia in the East? You will have to submit to a fait accompli which will seriously affect your prestige if not your interests in the east. If in a war with Prussia we should be victorious, we can make peace by compensating ourselves. we shall not expend our blood and treasure for nothing. 137.

"In replying to His Imperial Highness I confined myself to general observations---saying that I could not see what either France or Germany could gain by a war which would be ruinous to both. Both were great and powerful nations which could well live at peace with each other---enriching each other with their produce of industry and trade---without rivalry or blows---that I could not believe Germany would ever become aggressive towards her neighbours---that it was not in her nature to be so---and that the military Power of prussia though formidable for defence was not so for aggression." The Landwehr, said Lord Augustus, 139

would not agree to leave their homes for the sake of conquest, and other powers were equally interested in protecting Constantinople from Russia, who would never dare to "undertake so hazardous a policy." ⁽⁴²⁾ ~~I then inquired from prince Napoleon what remedy he would suggest for the dangers and evils he had so forcibly described? Was it a Congress?~~ The Prince replied that an understanding must be come to before a Congress met. ~~(If peace is to be preserved, he said, it can only be preserved by a cordial and frank understanding between the Powers of Europe in all questions which are now in a state of half-solution. If some such course is not taken---if the present apathy of European statesmen continues---if some definitive and settled state for Europe is not agreed upon---a catastrophe sooner or later will overtake them when they will have to face the storm which they might by timely~~ ⁽¹⁾ ~~prudence and foresight have prevented."~~

This speech indeed emphasised the danger of war, but it definitely postponed war until prussia herself should provoke it by repudiating the Treaty of prague, and extending her full sovereignty to the South German states without offering compensation ¹⁴⁰ to France.

The confidence of Lord Lyons was ^(fully) justified, for the war scare passed away, although on April 28th Claremont was still writing that the situation was acutely dangerous: Rigault and Niel were determined on war---"I know both well, and both are cold, calculating, ambitious men....The imminent danger is that Marshal (name omitted in despatch) has evidently made up his mind for war and that regardless of any remonstrance he actively

⁽¹⁴⁾ Loftus to Stanley, 14. 3. 68. F.O. Prussia, 640.

pursues the preparation for it... If after all this excitement nothing is done the Army will think the Emperor has given way, and with people so tetchy about the point of honour it will not tend to raise him in their estimation."⁴³⁾

Niel, however, was not able to carry his attempts at reorganisation far. The Chambers refused the money necessary to carry out his plans, which were thus brought to a stop. At the same time Napoleon decided to refuse the Italian offer, and Niel had said to his master, "I would let myself be torn in four pieces rather than, with my consent, France should enter on war without outside alliances." The last attempt to put France in readiness for the day of wrath failed. Napoleon was too deeply committed to the Clericals to evacuate Rome, and the Italians stuck to this as a sine qua non.⁴⁴⁾ The military reforms were stopped, and the rumours of war died away. Napoleon tried another plan to solve the Roman problem, and this also failed. He proposed to hand over the task of defending Rome to Spain, and in this way he hoped to extricate himself without offending the Clericals and displeasing his wife. Isabella the Catholic eagerly accepted the offer. The negotiations were almost concluded, when she was dethroned by a revolution. The French government suspected Bismarck, but though the coincidence was a lucky one for him, there is no

43) Claremont to Lyons, 28. April, 1868. F.O. France, 1704.

44) The final reply to Italy was friendly in tone, but pointed out that the withdrawal of the garrison "would be taken in Europe as a sign that His Majesty was preparing for war, while he was in truth most desirous of preserving peace." So Nigra told Lyons. Lyons to F.O., 25 Sept. 1868. F.O. France, 1709.

evidence
~~ication~~ that he was implicated.

Negotiations with Austria had gone on at the same time as those with Italy. Beust was ready enough, but both Austria and Hungary were averse to another war, and he dared not pledge himself too deeply. He had also set off on a wild-goose-chase, the object of which was to checkmate both Prussia and Russia; Russia was to be detached from her ally by the bribe of revising the Treaty of Paris 1856, and at the same time her pretensions in the East were to be ended by putting the reform of the Turkish empire and the protection of the Christians under the collective authority of Europe by means of a congress. It was in itself a statesmanlike idea: Russia was known to be aiming at the abolition of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of 1856, and it was believed that she would seize the chance of a Franco-German dispute to repudiate them. But Beust could not bring his plans into a practical shape. In the first place he bitterly offended Russia by suggesting European control of Turkey, for Russia saw that this was intended to lessen her personal influence, and the bribe offered was not enough to compensate her for this, for she believed that by sticking to Prussia she could gain in both ways. Next, for the success of the scheme British cooperation was a necessity, and Beust could not convince Britain that there was real danger ^{from} ~~for~~ Russia, for the government did not believe that ^{Russia} ~~she~~ had any definite understanding with Prussia; and they were unwilling either to make concessions to ^{her} ~~Russia~~ in the Black Sea, or take on the responsibility of superintending the reform-

"He did not care even if the whole Eastern Question were brought under discussion, because he felt convinced some day or other this must be the case, and therefore the sooner it took place the better." (Beust to Bloomfield in conversation, 29.12.68.)

ation of Turkey.

Moustier, whose first interest was the Eastern Question, was also ~~anxious for~~ collective action on the part of the powers. He was aware that Russia was restless, and actually hoped for the support of Prussia as well as Britain in restraining her.

In January 1868 he had told Lyons that "his recent communications with the Prussian government had been satisfactory, and that he felt convinced that friendship between the two countries would be preserved. He thought the great danger to the tranquillity of Europe came from ~~Russia~~. The machinations of that power against Turkey were, he observed, carried on with an activity ¹⁴⁷ and a boldness which showed that she counted upon a war in Europe, which would give free scope for the accomplishment of her designs in the East. It seemed in fact that she expected and desired a war between France and Prussia, and that she did not spare insinuations at Berlin ~~abaculated~~ to produce irritation and excite suspicion there against France. He thought however that the government of ~~Prussia~~ was beginning to be apprehensive of the progress of Russia in the East. He had himself pointed out to Comte de Goltz...that if the plans of Russia were accom- ¹⁴⁸plished, she would become a very formidable rival to Prussia." Moustier suspected that Russia would like to take the Slavonic provinces of Austria, bribing Prussia with Austria's German provinces to consent. "But this would be an exchange very much to the disadvantage of Prussia, and it could not be more for the interest of Prussia than it was for the interest of France that Russia should extend her possessions to the Adriatic: nor could it be safe for Prussia that Russia should be the sole power in

the East." Later, Moustier confided to Lyons that Prussia suspected France of trying to embroil her with Russia over the Eastern Question. In reality, he only wished to use Prussian influence to bring Russia back into the European concert... "Comte de Goltz also appeared to be quite aware that it was of great importance to Prussia to prevent an outbreak of Pan Slavism... Count Bismarck did not express these sentiments with equal distinctness... The whole difficulty in treating the matter lay... in the fear entertained by Count Bismarck that Prussia might lose the support of Russia if she became involved in a quarrel with France or Austria." He hoped to overcome this by tact and sincerity and by treating the Eastern Question as a thing apart. In October he spoke to Lyons about the international situation in a cheerful tone, though for the time he had abandoned his efforts to coax Prussia to support him in the East. "M. de Moustier went on to say that under present circumstances his desire was to avoid mooted any question with Prussia---to avoid giving rise to any incident. The two governments should be as civil as possible, but should abstain from discussions in the present state of public feeling; they should take off their hats to each other with marked civility, but should not enter into conversation. He was, he said, on the whole satisfied with the aspect of things on the other side of the Rhine, and free from apprehension."

Moustier's wish to avoid an incident was disappointed, though at first all seemed well, and the year closed in a much

more peaceful

46) Lyons to F.O., 2 Jan., 27 Feb. 1868. F.O. France, 1700, 1702.

47) Bismarck evaded reply, and would only say that he wished to maintain a passive attitude. See also Benedetti, Chap. V.

48) Lyons to F.O., 8 Oct. 1868. F.O. France, 1709.

More peaceful
 atmosphere than that in which it had opened.

"Unless this interminable Eastern Question springs up," wrote Loftus, "We may look for a year of peace. No one is inclined for war, and no country has the financial means for it." Nevertheless a new war scare arose within a few months. 15-2

It was now clear to Napoleon that the guarantees of the Treaty of Prague were of little practical value. The military conventions and the new Zollverein treaties had cut away the ground from beneath them and left them in the air. He had almost brought himself to accept the completion of German unity as a regrettable but inevitable fact, if it were only brought about by a process sufficiently gradual and quiet. But the means by which this end was being accomplished attracted his attention and admiration, and the bright idea occurred to him---why should not France learn from Prussia and attempt something similar? 15-3

A customs-union with Belgium and Luxembourg, perhaps with Holland and Switzerland, was an arrangement which, he thought, could produce nothing but good to all concerned. It could not reasonably be objectionable to Germany or to Britain. Bismarck had continually protested that the Zollverein treaties and the military conventions even were of an entirely non-political nature, and did not in the slightest degree compromise the independence of the South German states, if this were so, then the government in Berlin could have no objection if France entered into a similar economic arrangement with Belgium and Luxembourg. Britain had taken the same attitude with regard to the Zollverein, she ~~and~~ had ~~also~~ given it her hearty approval as an advance in the dir- 15-4

Jan.
 Private letter to Egerton, 11.1.68. F.O. Russia 638.

action of Free Trade, so she ought ~~(in consistency)~~ to hail with pleasure the news on a similar advance in the case of France and Belgium.

A customs union treaty, once concluded, would, Napoleon hoped, be followed in a few years by a military convention, and if these arrangements could be extended to Holland, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, the position of France would be much more secure. The Belgian marches were her weakest frontier, and the one on which she was most open to an attack. Defensive alliances with her neighbours would lessen the danger of war, while the customs union would add to the prosperity of both parties. As yet no steps were to be taken in the direction of military conventions, but some preliminary arrangements pointing towards a customs-union should at once be entered on.

An opportunity was easily found. The French Eastern Railway Company drew up a scheme for the union of their lines with those of a Belgian and a Dutch company. The Belgian Company was ready to sell, and the French government offered to advance a sum of money sufficient for the purchase. This might be the first step to a commercial understanding. The arrangement had been concluded between the two companies, when agitation against the scheme began in Belgium.

The public there did not believe that Napoleon's object was ^{merely} no more than a customs-union. They believed this was a pretext, and that his real object was to subvert their independence. He was, it was said, meditating an attack on Germany, and wished to control the Eastern railways for the purpose of transporting his troops through Belgium. Even if only a customs-union were in

question they did not want it, for the mercantile classes, there as in France, were all ^{for} high protectionists.

Questions were asked in the Belgian parliament, and M. Frère-Orban, in reply, said that the arrangement of the railway companies could not be carried out without government sanction. The Belgian company ignored this statement, and continued their preparations for the sale, ^{and} the chambers then hastily passed a law prohibiting the sale of Belgian railways to a foreign customer without consent of government. In the meantime the Belgian agitation had communicated itself to London, where it was Believed that France intended an immediate attack on Belgian independence, and the Liberal government, which in 1868 had ^{succeeded} replaced the conservatives, fell into a panic. 158

In Paris they were very angry. Napoleon had no immediate designs on Belgian independence, and he was hurt and indignant at having his beneficent ~~(or so he had persuaded himself)~~ intentions thrown back in his face with insult. Public opinion was much disturbed at this new set-back to France, coming so unexpectedly, and excitement was increased by a rumour that Bismarck had incited the Belgian government to resistance. Quai d'Orsay was in the mood to blame him for every misfortune: to them, 159

In a word, be it understood,

He was always for ill, and never for good.

According to Sybel Bismarck preserved a strict neutrality. A stronger argument is that the conduct of the Belgian government can be well accounted for by other motives. It is not impossible (50)

(50) The French foreign office papers might throw some light on the matter, but the publication has not yet reached 1869. La Vallette told Lyons that Bismarck had planned the whole affair from the beginning. See Lyons, Vol. 1. Chapter 6. p. 213. Lynn & Clarwood, 16 Feb. 69

that the Belgian government mentioned the matter to Bismarck, and that he advised them to take up a bold attitude. He may also have increased the panic in London, for it was always his habit to insinuate there that France was nourishing designs on Belgian independence. But all this is mere guess-work. It is certainly remarkable that Bismarck made no attempt to use the incident to bring on a quarrel with France. According to Sybel, Belgium asked for his support during the dispute, and could get no promise from him. This might be due to a desire for peace, or to acknowledge that Napoleon had never intended to attack Belgium, and would not risk a war on a point that would involve a quarrel with Great Britain, and (on) which he ^{was} could have ^{been} ~~obtained~~ ^{unpopular} no popular support in France itself. Napoleon's intentions had been at first quite peaceable, and the greatest danger of war came from the conduct of Great Britain. 160

The Queen had been the first person to take alarm, and on the 14th of January had made General Grey write to Clarendon on the subject. Shortly after Gladstone drew up a memorial referring to French designs on Belgian independence, and instructions were sent to Lyons to drop a hint that Belgium was still under British protection. When the panic began, Gladstone wrote to Clarendon, "The day when this nation seriously suspects France of meaning ill to Belgian independence will be the last day of friendship with that country, and...then a future will open for which no man can answer." Clarendon also took the matter very seriously, but hoped France might still pull up on the road to perdition. "Bismarck is biding his time quietly," he wrote, "if

(51) Lyons ~~was~~ i. 214.

France annexes Belgium and we take no part he will be delighted, as France could no longer complain of Prussian aggrandisement.

If we do take part he would be equally delighted at the rupture between England and France, and would come to our assistance.

Either way he thinks Prussia would gain. Why should Napoleon and la Valette assist him? A quarrel between France and England or even a coolness is the great German desideratum." 163

The cabinet then drew up a despatch, couched in very strong terms, warning France to desist from her supposed intention of annexation. There was, however, some consciousness that this was a dangerous step to take. They wavered, and could not decide whether to send the despatch or not. At last it was sent to Paris, and Lord Lyons was told to use his own discretion as to whether he should present it or not. Such responsibility was not altogether to the taste of the *douce* ambassador, but, being told to use his discretion, he had no doubt as to his course. Convinced of the conciliatory spirit of la Valette, and believing that Napoleon's annoyance would pass off, he suppressed the despatch, the presentation of which would have made Napoleon's position much more difficult, as his enemies in France ^c would ~~at once~~ ^{then} have accused him of getting the country into a scrape, and ~~then~~ meekly drawing back under fear of British threats. As it was, the Emperor was left alone, and made up his mind to withdraw. Niel and Fleury were sent on a special mission to London with assurances of their government's peaceful intentions. Clarendon, however, was still much depressed. "I have never, as you know," he wrote to Lyons, "Felt any confidence in the soft sayings of the French government, but I did not think they would have exposed 164

Lyons ~~and I. (No date given)~~ I. p. 215. (No date given.) 165

the cloven hoof so soon and so ~~completely~~ as they have done. No affair has given me so much pain since my return to this place, and I foresee that out of it will grow serious complications and an end to those friendly relations between England and France that are so advantageous to both countries, and which have had an important influence on the politics of Europe... The policy of the French government is perfectly understood at Berlin, where the leading object of Bismarck is to detach us from France. We might tomorrow, if we pleased, enter into a coalition with Prussia against France for the protection of Belgian independence which is a European and not an exclusively French question; but we will do nothing of the kind so long as there is hope that France will act with common honesty... I send you rather a curious despatch from Loftus. Bismarck's ways are inscrutable, and he is never to be relied upon, but he has had a union with us against France in his head ever since the Belgian business began. Bernstorff, Clarendon went on to say, has several times preferred such an alliance. "I treated this, as did Gladstone, rather as a... ruse to detach us from France... as I did not choose that Bernstorff should have to report the slightest encouragement to the suggestion, but it may come to that after all." This letter seems to suggest that Bismarck, in spite of Sybel's statement, would willingly have made use of the incident if he could, and only the really peaceful intentions of France, and the backwardness of Clarendon and Gladstone to commit themselves to Prussia, prevented his success. We may see, all the same, that Clarendon had travelled far since he so fiercely repudiated the "man with-

out faith and without law." Russell had spoken to him favourably concerning the German proposals. Bernstorff reports that Russell said to him: "I said to Clarendon, too, that in case of a war between France and Germany, we should not at the beginning make too binding a declaration of neutrality, for probably the moment would come, when we ourselves would have to join in the war." (54) 169
Bernstorff, however, was more of an enthusiast for the British alliance than Bismarck, who finally decided to tell Loftus that he would not enter any alliance with Britain against France, without making his own conditions. Perhaps he doubted if Britain would really go so far; perhaps he did not wish to commit himself, until war had actually broken out, to a government which he despised and distrusted.

In the meantime the difficulty was in a way to be quietly settled. Frère-Orban visited Paris, and had been coaxed, threatened, entreated, to consent either to the sale of the railways, 170 or to a customs-union; but he had refused both, only saying that Belgium was ready to grant compensation to the railway company. Moreover, the idea of a customs-union was very unpopular in France itself. The government eventually decided to accept Frère-Orban's proposal of compensation, and the affair of the railways was settled by an international commission.

Throughout ^{time the} all this negotiations with Austria and Italy had lingered on; but no definite arrangement could be concluded. The Emperor could not bring himself to the ~~definite~~ break with the Clericals which was necessary if he were to accept Italy's proposals: for Italy held firm to the evacuation of Rome as a condition. Nor would Napoleon commit himself so far as to enter

into the offensive and defensive alliance against Prussia that was now suggested by Austria. No treaties, therefore, could be concluded: but the Emperor exchanged private letters with ~~Franz~~ ^{Emanuel} Josef and Victor ~~Emmanuel~~, in which the three sovereigns gave their ~~adhesion to~~ the principle of joint action, of an unspecified nature, against Prussia, to be taken at some undecided date in the future. There was nothing binding in these declarations ---nothing that committed Austria and Italy. France was left, 172 without an ally in Europe, to face the crisis that now descended upon her, with apparent suddenness, but in reality after long and careful preparation.

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24. 3. 39
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I
"Seriously, I am nearly desperate. The utter contempt with which this government treats all international questions....and Gladstone's absence of control and sagacity point to one resultthe entire ruin of our national policy, and the loss of all (1) our European prestige."

So wrote Malet to Merier in the spring of 1870. The two were preoccupied with foreign ^{policy} affairs, were fully conscious of the tension of the situation in Germany, and could not sympathise with the absorbing interest which the Gladstone government had in home affairs. With [the exceptions of ~~the Foreign Secretary~~, Lord Clarendon, and Lord Granville, ~~who had been Foreign Secretary in previous administrations~~] that government was composed of men whose interests lay almost entirely at home, and who were very ignorant of foreign affairs. Their minds were teeming with plans of reform----not so much the social reforms that were urgently needed, as with new experiments, commercial, political, and religious. Their watchword was economy, and they relied on this to win them popularity, even if it meant a constant paring down of necessary expenditure, while they put their **schemes** into action. They had no time to study the international situation, and on the surface it was reassuring. ~~(They were very ready to believe that the barometer stood at Set Fair.)~~

The excitement in France seemed to have settled down, ~~(and it was hoped that jealousy and fear of Germany would gradually disappear)~~. The Emperor had introduced a new constitutional form of

government, ~~and, though it was feared that this might damage the insecure hold of the Free Trade system in France,~~ ^{which,} it was hoped, ~~too, that it~~ would give an additional security for peace. Everyone was weary of change---except those tiresome Italians, who were still brooding over the "folly of trying to make Rome their capital." (2)

As long as Germany did not move, everything would keep quiet; and Germany, they were confident, would not move.

Was not Bismarck continually crying, "Peace, Peace!"? He was well aware that any further step towards German unity would give offence to France, and would he not anxiously avoid a quarrel with his powerful neighbour? ~~Colonel~~ Colonel Walker, the British military attaché at Berlin, had reported that "The mutual indisposition of the North and South of Germany was becoming so manifest that the unification of Germany was far distant," and Lord Clarendon had the highest opinion of Walker's judgment. (3)

Clarendon's hopes were wont to "spring like daisies in the grass, cut down and up again as blithe as ever," and the memory of the needle-gun had almost faded from his mind. He looked on the Prussian army as the King's plaything, and believed that Prussia would be content with her gains, and seek to make no further advance for the present. ~~(The idea that Prussia might try to pick a quarrel with France would have appeared to him and his colleagues as ridiculous.)~~ 4.

In Paris, they were by no means so free ^{from} of alarm. The advent of the constitutional regime had brought into office the Liberal Ollivier, and the able diplomat Daru; and the new cabinet had

(2) Lord Russell to Clarendon, 18. ^{Oct.} 67. Clarendon Vol. II p. 337.
 (3) Lyons Vol. 2, p. 219.

at once put a ~~stop~~ to the secret negotiations with Austria and Italy, and to all negotiations not having a strictly pacific tendency. A rumour got about in January, 1870, that Prussia was meditating the creation of a "North German Empire," and Ollivier, in much alarm, ^{said} that another blow from Prussia to France would, ~~immediately~~ in the present state of opinion, mean war, ~~and~~ suggested, as a means of lessening the tension, ~~disarmament~~ 5. disarmament on both sides. He asked that Lord Clarendon would propose ~~this~~ at Berlin, ^{giving it out as his own idea,} as of British inception, to avoid the danger of a rude repulse for France. Clarendon was ready to agree to this, for, he averred, if Bismarck heard that the proposal came from France, he would think, "that we had cast in our lot completely with France," and "would straightway set about an intimate alliance with Russia, which would not be for the interests of either England or France." (4)

No encouragement was given at Berlin. ~~Mr Spenlow, it appeared,~~ ^{Bismarck, it appeared,} dared not ~~(even) mention the matter to Mr Jorkins,~~ ^{he} would not even dare to name the subject of your letters to the King, much less show it to His Majesty," Loftus reported to Clarendon. (2)

Daru did not despair, and replied that France would begin to disarm in any case, whatever Prussia might do. Clarendon heartily approved this. "Nothing," said he, "is more likely to bring over

(1) Clarendon and his colleagues did not yet credit the Russo-Prussian bargain. Cf. Benedetti, p. 254. "Enclin de ne voir dans les aggrandissements de la Prusse que de nouveaux gages pour le maintien de la paix continentale, l'ambassadeur d'Angleterre (Loftus) s'est longtemps refusé à croire que l'accord de la Prusse est de la Russie peut être envisagé avec inquiétude."

Germany than France partially disarming without reference to Prussia." ^eBaru, whether he agreed or not with this optimistic statement, diminished the rate of the yearly conscription in France by one-tenth, ^{(6) (2)} and at the same time urged Clarendon to continue his efforts. Prussia, he pointed out, was erecting fortifications on the North Sea, and she maintained a garrison in Mayence for which there was no legal justification. These points might be brought forward. So Clarendon once more approached the Chancellor, whom he found in a more jovial mood. This time Bismarck ~~replied~~ that he was afraid to disarm, averring that Denmark was making military movements which had a "sinister" significance. Clarendon, who does not seem to have perceived any impertinence in this reply, persisted, only to be told that Bismarck had laid the proposals before the King, and received "an absolute 'No'." ^{8.}

"What if we recommended you to diminish your naval armament?" ^{(7) (2)} Bismarck thus countered the arguments of Loftus. The ambassador answered that Britain had already sold an ironclad to Prussia, and was perfectly ready to sell as many more as Prussia could pay for, ^{and} ~~he~~ did not understand the convulsions of laughter into which the Chancellor fell. ⁽⁸⁾ ~~One cannot help rejoicing that Bismarck had a sense of humour, and that Lord Augustus did not waste his sweetness on a wholly desert air.~~ ⁽³⁾ Sybel, in his "Begründung des Deutschen ~~Reichs~~, " has tried to

⁽¹⁾ The numbers were in all reduced from 100,000 to 80,000.

⁽²⁾ This year Britain spent £24,250,000 on armaments, £14,000,000 for the army and £10,000,000. The total naval and military expenditure of ~~The North German~~ Confederation was £10,800,000.

⁽³⁾ The best account of the disarmament negotiations is found in Lyons, Vol 1. It never reached the official papers.

condone the flippancy with which the disarmament proposals were received by Bismarck, by asserting that they were essentially frivolous and absurd. A mutual and proportionate disarmament, such as was proposed, would, he says, have been useless, as it would have left France and Prussia in exactly the same relative position as before. The argument may be taken for what it is worth. If France and Prussia had each reduced their armaments by 90%, their relative positions would have remained exactly the same: nevertheless there would have been considerably more ground for believing that neither of them intended to attack the other. 9.

This failure was discouraging, and the cause of peace soon received another blow. The Emperor wished to obtain the sanction of France for the new form of government by means of a plebiscite, ^{but his} ~~The~~ ^{ministers} Liberals feared that he might use this expedient in future to undermine ministerial authority, and there was a split in the Cabinet on the question whether the authority of the Chambers was necessary for the measure. Daru and Buffet, two of the ablest and most ^{peace-loving} ~~peaceable~~ ministers, resigned; and Daru's place was taken by the Duc de Gramont, late ambassador at Vienna, a man of poor capacity and uncertain temper, who had long predicted that a war with Prussia was inevitable. The effect of the change was soon seen. While Daru was still in office the Arch- 10.
duke Albrecht of Austria had come to Paris and laid before Napoleon a plan of campaign for a joint attack on Prussia. He had obtained no success; but now an envoy was sent by Napoleon to Vienna, to keep the possibility open. No arrangement was concluded, however, and no treaty signed. 11.

Amphill

A few years after this, Lady ~~Odo Russell~~ was sitting beside Bismarck at a state dinner. The Chancellor opened the conversation by saying to her, "I was never so glad of anything in my life as when I heard of your father's death." Clarendon's daughter having betrayed by her expression the feelings which this remark aroused, he realised that his playfulness had approached ill-manners, and hastily exclaimed that she must not take it so; he had only meant that if Clarendon had lived he would have prevented the Franco-German War. 12.

Amphill

Perhaps Bismarck's sole object was to pay Lady ~~Odo Russell~~ a pretty compliment; if so, the remark is only interesting for the future compiler of some work on "German society in the 19th Century." Possibly, however, he really meant to create an impression, that he believed Clarendon could have restrained the French Government. This is in accordance with a certain *English* view, voiced by Morier, that Britain could have prevented the war by telling Napoleon that if he declared war she herself would fight on the side of Germany. ~~But if this had been the case, no one would have regretted this more than Bismarck, and we cannot say that Clarendon might not have done so, though it seems next to impossible that he could have got the consent of the cabinet to make such a threat. He did die, however, on the 27th of June, just in time to save Bismarck from the imagined danger. His successor was Lord Granville. The Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs was at this time Mr Hammond, a person whose fate it has been to be remembered by posterity solely for his greatest indiscretion. He told Lord Granville, on July 6th, that never had he known "so great a lull~~ 13.

stop

being

mistake

14.

in foreign affairs." Ten days later France declared war on Germany, and the crisis which led to the quarrel was already well advanced.

11.

It was a crisis that had been maturing for nearly two years. The same ~~stroke~~^{event}, which had ruined Napoleon's hopes of withdrawing his garrison from Rome, had sown the dragon's teeth which in 1870 sprang up as armed men.

Spanish affairs, since the days of Louis XIV, had always brought ill-luck to French governments who meddled with them. In the 19th century they caused the downfall of three dynasties.

At first, Napoleon had been preoccupied with the ill turn the Spanish Revolution had done him with regard to Rome, ^{and} The question, ^{should mean} to whom the crown of Spain ~~should now fall~~, had not yet caused much anxiety in France.

Just after the Revolution Lyons had written, "He (Moustier) would not say to me that if he were squeezed like a sponge he might not confess that some modes of settling the Spanish Question would ^{not} be less agreeable than others to France; but he did not intend to volunteer any opinion---much less should he exercise any pressure. The natural desire of the Spaniards to be on cordial terms with so powerful a neighbour as France would no doubt weigh with them in settling their form of government, and this feeling might be left to ^{(9.) (11)} work its own way."

It was possible that the revolution might end in the establ-

lishment of a republic; but, ^{most of the powers} ~~foreign governments~~ all deprecated such a conclusion, republics being regarded with fear and distrust at this time. British opinion held them to be unstable and (10) unreliable, and continental dynasties feared that their own subjects might ^{imitate} ~~emulate~~ their neighbours. There was a strong republican party in Spain, but the energetic Catalonian, Prim, who was at the head of affairs, was a monarchist, and he was looking about for an eligible prince to found a new dynasty.

It was a difficult task; the eligible princes did not wish to accept the uneasy crown of Spain, and those who were ready to accept were ineligible for various reasons.

The candidate preferred by the French government was the Prince of the Asturias; but he was still a child, and his return meant the restoration of the influence of Isabella, which Spain would not tolerate. The Carlists still numbered many adherents, but Don Carlos would never be accepted by the progressive and republican elements. The Duc de Montpensier, the ex-Queen's brother-in-law, was willing enough, but he as an Orleans prince was objectionable to Napoleon, and besides, he was personally disliked in Spain. This exhausted the princes who had any personal connection with Spain, and it was difficult to find candidates abroad.

An English prince would have been preferred, especially as some simple-minded schemers suggested that he might bring Gibraltar as a Liebesgabe: but the British government had no mind

(10) "It is difficult for our English mind, with the history of France for the last 80 years before us, to regard republicanism as more than a fleeting stage in European politics." "Times," 30 Jan. 1871.
30.1.71.

to let one of Victoria's princelings set off on so expensive a wild-goose-chase, and one that might give offence to foreign powers. The King of Portugal would have been even more welcome, for this ²⁰ would have produced an "Iberic Union", but the King and his heirs persistently refused. Belgium had no prince to spare, and though offers were made to Amadeo of Savoy, younger son of Victor Emanuel, and to his cousin, Thomas Duke of Genoa, they were also refused, for the Italian Crown Prince had no child, and ²⁰ the enterprise was a dangerous one, with a risk of assassination.

The situation was now becoming strained. The longer it lasted the more difficult became the position of the provisional government, and the spectacle of the Spanish crown being hawked about Europe was becoming ridiculous. Prim was therefore very ready to listen when one of his colleagues, Salazar y Mazarredo, suggested Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen.

As early as 1866, this name had been suggested to Salazar by Werthern, Prussian envoy to Spain, and Werthern had reported ¹¹⁾ the conversation to Bismarck, the King, and Prince Karl Anton. ²¹ The family were then much in the public eye, having just established a son as Prince of Roumania, and Leopold himself was married to a Portuguese princess. They had originally been the eldest branch of the Hohenzollerns, but had lately resigned their sovereign rights and the headship of the family to King William. After Prince Amadeo refused, Salazar took up the idea

11) Lord, p. 16.

seriously. In March 1869, Rancès y Villanueva, ambassador at Vienna, visited Berlin, and saw Bismarck. Benedetti, whose suspicions were at once aroused, questioned both Rancès and Thiele-- Bismarck had gone on holiday---and both denied that the visit 22 had any connection with the candidature of Prince Leopold. Benedetti was called to Paris for instructions, where the Emperor told him: "The candidature of the Duc de Montpensier is merely anti-dynastic, it affects no one but me, and I can accept it; the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern is essentially anti-national, the country will not endure it, and it must be prevented." 12)

Bismarck now sent Theodor Bernhardt, who was high in his confidence, to Spain, and there followed an offer from Prim to Prince Karl Anton of the Crown of Spain for his son Leopold. The 23 offer was refused. "The Prince, King William, and Bismarck were of the same opinion about it," says Sybel.

Benedetti, returning to his post, approached Bismarck himself, and was assured that the Chancellor regarded the tenure of the Spanish crown by a foreign prince as ephemeral and dangerous, and that if the Cortès made the offer the King would certainly not advise the prince to accept. Benedetti, anxious to avoid the appearance of picking unnecessary quarrels, merely said that the Emperor would continue to observe complete circumspection regarding Spain, but had the highest interest in its affairs; but he 24 reported that he was not absolutely satisfied by the Chancellor's assurances. "Es liegt hier ein glänzendes Beispiel," says Sybel, "Wie ein argwohnischer Geist aus einem nichts heraus Vorstell-

12) Benedetti, p. 307.

13)
ungen entwickelt."¹³⁾

The French government approved Benedetti's moderate language. They need not take further steps in Berlin unless they had proof that Spain really intended to make the offer. It was natural that they should wish to avoid raising unnecessary difficulties with Prussia, but it laid them open to the accusation, later, that Benedetti had not mentioned Napoleon's objections to Bismarck.

In July, 1869, a great Berlin banker wrote to Salazar to 25
urge the advantages of the Hohenzollern candidature, and as a second attempt on King Ferdinand and on the Duke of Genoa had no success, Salazar in September applied to Werthern for an introduction to Prince Karl Anton. Werthern, of course with Bismarck's connivance, took him secretly to Weinburg, where he saw both the princes. They did not refuse the offer, but they made it a condition of acceptance that there should be no rival candidate, no danger of trouble from Portugal, and a unanimous invitation. Salazar was not discouraged. "Je pars demain matin pour Paris assez satisfait de mon voyage. Pour ôter toute apparence de menace à la Prusse nous tâcherons de faire agréer la candidature de l'Empereur. Mais reste à savoir si le roi Guillaume l'accepter de son côté. Je sais que le Prince de Hohenzollern craint beaucoup son parent, il ne veut passer la place d'ambitieux, et il desire qu'on lui force la main au lieu de montrer son désir lui-même." 26
14)

On returning to Spain, Salazar advised Prim to try hard for

13) "Here is a shining example of how a suspicious mind makes substance out of shadows." Sybel, VI, p. 179.

14) Salazar to Werthern, 20 Sept. 1869. Fester, I, p. 36.

Leopold, reminding him that Napoleon was related by marriage to the prince, and might therefore be glad to accept him. Werthern was ordered to keep Bismarck fully informed as to how the affair 27. was going on. The sounding of France, however, gave no encouraging result. On being told that Leopold was a possible candidate Mercier, the French ambassador, replied that he was convinced that public opinion in France would not accept a Prussian candidate, and, apparently discouraged by this, the Spanish government decided to keep the negotiation entirely secret.

In February 1870, Salazar induced Prim to write a personal letter to Leopold, and he himself again interviewed Karl Anton. This time the offer was laid before the King, and Bismarck wrote a report strongly in favour of acceptance. The two princes came 28. to Berlin, and they discussed the offer with the King, at a dinner at which were present also Bismarck; the Crown Prince; Thile, the under-secretary for foreign affairs; Delbrück, the director of the Ministry of Commerce; Moltke, the chief of the general staff; and Roon, the Minister of War. The councillors unanimously decided for acceptance, as a "patriotic duty to 15) France Prussia." According to Delbrück, no one mentioned at the council, but at table Moltke was asked, "Are we ready if France takes it 29. ill?" and replied with a "silent nod."

The King, however, could not be persuaded to look favourably on the proposal, and after long hesitation Leopold decided that he could not accept unless

15) "eine preussische patriotische Pflichterfüllung." Karl Anton to Karl of Roumania, 20 March 1870. Fester, I, p. 65.

he could not accept unless the King commanded him to do so. The King would give no command---only if Leopold found himself called by "a voice within," he would agree to the acceptance.

Bismarck was much disappointed. He encouraged Salazar to turn his attention to Prince Frederick, the younger son, but the same answer was given. Neither he nor Karl Anton, however, had yet given up hope, and he sent Major Versen on a special mission to Spain. Since February Bismarck had kept up a secret correspondence with Salazar. But Leopold still proved obdurate, and on May 4 Thile "with deep regret" telegraphed a final refusal. Prim was at his wits' end, and applied to Napoleon to make a personal appeal to Ferdinand of Portugal to accept the crown. Napoleon did so, but without success.

Bismarck was ill. "Everything now depends," wrote Versen on May 14, "On the speedy recovery of Count Bismarck." A few days later Versen returned from Spain, interviewed Karl Anton, and at last persuaded Leopold to reconsider his decision, going at once to Bismarck with his news. Bismarck wrote to Karl Anton, urging acceptance "in the interest of Germany," and then sent a letter to Prim informing him that if he were of the same mind he might try again. Lothar Bucher, Bismarck's friend, went to Spain to ensure the success of this step. He returned with Salazar, and both repaired to Sigmaringen, where they at last obtained complete success. Leopold would accept, if the King would telegraph "agreed." The message came, and Salazar telegraphed acceptance to Prim.

Bismarck himself, and a school of German historians of whom Sybel is the chief, have endeavoured to show that the Hohenzoll-

16) Karl of Roumania to K. Anton, 1 April 1870. Fester I, p. 69.

17) Fester I, p. 81. 18) "Im Interesse Deutschlands." Ib. p. 84.

ern Candidature was regarded in Berlin simply as "a family affair" concerning the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringens only; and this was the attitude taken up by the Prussian government at the time, for they denied having any official knowledge of or interest in the affair. (10) According to this view, King William consulted Bismarck as "his most trustworthy adviser," and for the same reason summoned his foreign minister, under-secretary for foreign affairs, director of commerce, minister of war, and chief of staff, to discuss the private affairs of his young cousin.

This view will not bear inspection. The accession of a prince of a royal house to the throne of a European power was not, and could not be, a purely family matter. The European powers had always claimed the right to interfere, if they considered their interests involved, in such questions. Within forty years this right had been exercised by various powers in the cases of Belgium, Denmark, and Greece, and during the last two hundred years the question of who should occupy the throne of Spain had caused two European wars and a revolution. Had it been proposed to place Prince Napoleon on the throne of Austria, would Prussia have been content that Napoleon III should weigh the question simply as a family matter? (20)

Possibly the Hohenzollerns at first applied for the King's advice simply because he was head of the house---though it must be remembered that William was head of the house only because he was King of Prussia. But the King could not so dis sever his official from his personal existence as to decide a question with

(10) "The negotiations were officially brought to the knowledge of the King of Prussia under the express condition of secrecy. As they did not concern either Prussia or the N. German Confederation, the King accepted this condition, and in consequence he did not speak of the affair to his Government, as it was for him merely a family affair." Bismarck's Circular of 18.7.70

I do not include Roumania, as it was not then a sovereign state. (21) See above pp 9, 10. pp. 449-450

far-reaching political results simply as a private individual. If the matter were private, why did not the King consult his personal friends and relations, instead of the North German Chancellor and the Prussian Minister of War? 35.

It is possible, however, to show that all those concerned, including the Hohenzollerns themselves, discussed the proposal from a political point of view. In 1868, Karl of Roumania wrote to his father: "Ich möchte einen Orleans oder Philip von Koburg den Spanischen Thron besteigen sehen; nur nicht einen von Napoleon gebackten Regenten!" When Karl Anton made his first application to the King, in February 1870, he wrote: "Vertragen die Interessen der Preussischen Macht eine Lösung der Frage im Sinne der Annahme, so wollen es Eure Majestät mir zu erkennen geben lassen---vertragen sie es nicht, so ist unsere Entscheidung schon getroffen---sie lautet auf Ablehnung." On the same day he wrote to Bismarck: "Da der Gegenstand meiner heutigen Mitteilung aber nicht unsere Privatsache allein ist, und da höhere Staatsinteressen möglicherweise meiner unmassgeblichen Auffassung nach entgegenstehen, so muss ich an die Entscheidung S.M. des Königs appellieren." 22) Having related his dealings with Salazar, he went on to say: "The acceptance of the crown, on the one hand, is a historic incident, on the other, the token of an extraordinary increase in the strength of the Prussian power. A dynasty, which represents the weightiest force (Schwergewicht) of Central 37.

22) 1. "I would rather see an Orleans or Philip von Koburg mount the Spanish throne; only not a Regent backed by Napoleon!" 2. "If the interests of the Prussian power require a solution of the question in the sense of acceptance, Y.M. will let me understand it---if they do not require it, our decision is already taken---we incline to a refusal." 3. "As the subject of my today's communication is not a private affair of our own, and as, in my humble opinion, high interests of state possibly hinge upon it, so I must appeal to the decision of H.M. the King." Fester, I, pp. 56-7-8. (Italics mine)

Europe, and branches of which blossom upon the Black Sea and across the Pyrenees, the one ruling over a nascent civilisation, the other over one that has been---such a dynasty history has not seen since Charles V---with such a dynasty, therefore, there rests by the will of Providence a high mission, and a summons to rule over the most heterogeneous elements." (23)

Bismarck, in his February report to the King, treated the question entirely from a political point of view. At the council then held, everyone present discussed it only as an affair of high policy, with the sole exception of the Crown Prince, who spoke of the private and personal interest of his cousin Leopold. It has already been said that the unanimous decision was for acceptance "as a patriotic duty to Prussia." 38.

The subsequent correspondence of Bismarck and Salazar, and the ~~missions~~ ^{missions} of Bucher and Versen, were scarcely undertaken for a private and family affair of the prince, and certainly not in his personal interest, for at the time when Bismarck was thus pressing on the candidature, the Prussian ambassador at Madrid was telegraphing urgent warnings against the dangers of acceptance. 39.

"Bismarck wants acceptance," wrote Karl Anton to his son in Roumania, "On dynastic and political grounds, but the King only if Leopold wishes to answer the call." (25.)

Equally remote from fact is the argument put forward by Bismarck, and by subsequent historians, that the Chancellor believed that France would not object to the choice. Bismarck writes: "I had thought Prince Leopold would be no unwelcome neighbour in Spain to the Emperor Napoleon, and would travel to

(23) Fester Vol I, pp 58, 65.

(24) "Ne faites pas l'emprunt, en Espagne il faut de l'argent espagnol et non pas étranger."... "En cas que l'emprunt se fasse, la guerre civile tôt ou tard est inevitable." Canitz to Bismarck 17.3.70, 18.3.70. Fester Vol I, pp 64-5.

(25) Fester I p. 65.

Madrid via Paris, in order to get into touch with the Imperial French policy." The Hohenzollerns themselves did not believe this. (21) (26.)
 "Moreover France, on account of our connection with Prussia, can never permit the establishment of the Hohenzollerns on the other side of the Pyrenees. She is already swollen with jealousy, that one of the Hohenzollerns rules the lower Danube," Prince Karl Anton had written to his son in Roumania; and at first they had refused partly on the grounds that France would object, though (27) later Bismarck had persuaded them to withdraw this objection. Bismarck's assertion that he believed that the accession would automatically transform Leopold into a Spaniard was emphatically denied by the Prince himself, and is contradicted by Bismarck's own report to the King. (28) 41.

"With regard to France," he wrote, "It ~~would be~~ useful to have a country on that side of France, on whose sympathies we can count, and with whose feeling France will find it necessary to reckon. If in a war between Germany and France, affairs in Spain stood as under Isabella the Catholic, and if on the other hand a government in sympathy with Germany existed there, the difference between these two situations for us may be reckoned at two army corps. In the one case French troops would be made available through the goodwill of Spain, in the other case it would be necessary to leave an army corps on the frontier." (29) (41) 42.

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If the plot came to a successful issue, Bismarck must make a profit one way or the other. If France opposed the election in arms, he would have his war, and it would be a war declared by France, and fought by Germany (as he remarks in his memoirs) in defence of the liberty of Spain and her right to chose her own sovereign. If, on the other hand, France decided not to take the risk, but to accept another diplomatic defeat, he would still 43. have won a great victory. He would once more have humiliated Napoleon, have stuck another feather in the Hohenzollern's cap, and, above all, would have planted a new enemy on the flank of France---a power which in peace would support the policy of Prussia, and in war would be her secret or open ally.

From his point of view, the success of the game depended on its being presented to France as a fait accompli. Were the candidature to become known before the election were consummated, there was always a chance of something going wrong, and of 44. France securing an ~~eleventh~~ hour victory. If once the deed were done, and France went to war, she would have to fight both ~~Spain~~ Prussia and Spain. He was therefore anxious that the Cortès should proceed to the election immediately. A curious accident interfered. Salazar telegraphed home that he would be in Madrid by July 9th with Leopold's acceptance. In transmitting or deciphering the despatch, "July 9" was changed to "July 26". The Cortès were already grumbling, and it was impossible to keep them waiting longer for their summer holiday. Prim adjourned the assembly till November.

In the meantime rumours reached Paris, and Napoleon wrote 45.

to Gramont that Berlin and Madrid must be told, if this were true, that France would be greatly displeased. Mercier, however, reported that there was no real danger; Prim had received overtures from Prussia, but would not risk offending France. On the 3 of July Mercier changed his tune: Prim had announced ^{to him} that the Hohenzollern candidature was practically decided. Two days before, Prim, returning from a hunting party, had met two acquaintances, who congratulated him on having found a candidate. Salazar had been blabbing. The minister stood stupefied, then exclaimed, "Lost trouble, lost candidature, and God grant that may be all!" 46. He approached Mercier, who was frightfully agitated. Mercier declared France would have no security for her frontier in case of a European war, and could never accept a Prussian king of Spain. Prim replied despairingly: if everyone else refused, they might be reduced to Montpensier. Then, at a word of Mercier's, he cried, "Comment! vous croyez que l'Empereur aimerait mieux Montpensier qu'un Hohenzollern?" "Il ne me l'a pas dit," said Mercier, "Mais je n'en doute pas. L'Empereur est Français avant tout." 30)

The peculiarity of the fact that a mistake should have been in deciphering the most critical passage of a document so important has suggested that the mistake was either invented, or made use of, by Prim. He was hitherto, it is said, hardly aware that the incident was likely to lead to war, ~~with France~~, and was now awakened to the danger by a letter from Bismarck, in which that statesman showed so much eagerness for haste, and at the same time so much anxiety to avoid compromising himself, that

Prim began to suspect that he was actually hoping for a breach with France. Prim therefore adjourned the Cortes, in order to give Napoleon^v time to collect himself. It is certainly true that in June Prim had become very anxious for an interview with Napoleon, and was arranging to ^{meet} ~~visit~~ him at Vichy, where, he told Mercier, he would tell Napoleon all that had passed concerning the Prince of Hohenzollern. We have also Salazar's letter, quoted ~~by Lord, however, who had access to the newest materials, concludes that the mistake was genuine, and that Prim~~ 31) ~~all along~~ above, where he states that Spain would try to "faire agréer la candidature de l'Empereur."

Professor Lord, however, who had access to the newest materials, concludes that the mistake was genuine, and that Prim ~~all along~~ 32) intended to spring the election on Napoleon without warning. It is obvious, however, that Prim, who was perfectly sane, could never have contemplated the possibility of allowing distracted Spain to be dragged into a war with France. He must have been so absorbed in internal affairs that he failed to realise how acute was the tension between France and Prussia, and must have believed that Napoleon would rather acquiesce in a fait accompli, especially if he received personal friendly assurances from Prim, than make an undignified fuss over the matter. If this were, so, we may take it that his surprise in the interview with Mercier was genuine, and also by the fact that when he saw the crisis develop next week, he acceded to the requests of France, and begged the Hohenzollerns to withdraw.

31) See above, p. .

32) Lord, p. 23 ff.

In any case, the cat ~~was~~ out of the bag now.

In Berlin, the absence and inaccessibility of all the principal parties is so striking as to suggest a careful preparation. The French Chargé d'Affaires, who hurried to remonstrate, found only Thile at the Foreign Office, Bismarck was gathering wild strawberries at Varzin, the King taking the waters at Ems, Prince Leopold had gone for a walking tour in the Alps without leaving an address. Thile said the Prussian government was ignorant of the whole affair, which for it did not exist, and he simply denied that his interview with Benedetti in March 1869 had ever taken place. (Afterwards he said he had ~~"forgotten"~~ "forgotten" about it.) But Gramont was determined not to be put off by excuses, and he sent Benedetti straight to the weakest point of Bismarck's defences---to the King at Ems.

Gramont, nervous, excitable, ignorant, and vindictive, was in a state of violent agitation. He was convinced that Bismarck meant to force a war on France, and he saw that the danger was great. France had no allies. The government was tottering under a series of reverses at home and abroad. Now came a threat to plant a Prussian prince upon the throne of what had hitherto seemed the most negligible of neighbours.

All this, which should have made him the more cool and cautious, rendered Gramont frantic. He did not see that, if Bismarck had arranged the whole affair to provoke France into war, he could best counter Prussia's schemes by refusing to pick a quarrel. His language was wild and blustering. He irritated foreign opinion, which was, on the whole, favourable to France, by a reckless speech in the Chambers, in which he talked of

refusing to allow a Prussian prince to "mount the throne of Charles V," and in making Benedetti approach the King personally he took a daring step which, however happy it might have been in the hands of a more skilful diplomatist, Gramont himself woefully mismanaged.

At the same time he left no means untried to avoid war by getting the candidature withdrawn. Austria, Italy, Russia, and Britain were all entreated to remonstrate with Prussia; Napoleon ~~was induced by the King of the Belgians~~ induced the King of the Belgians to make a personal appeal of Leopold; Prim was coaxed and commanded until in the end he consented to send envoys to the Prince to beg him to withdraw; and pressure was put on the Hohenzollerns through Roumania, by threats that the French party there would organise a revolt if the candidature were persisted in. At the first moment, Ollivier and Gramont had persuaded the Prussian minister, Werther, to their views (he was not in Bismarck's secrets) and he had gone on leave to Ems, pledged to convey to the King their hopes that he would refuse to sanction the candidature.

Bismarck was in a state of acute suspense as to what his royal master might do, free from his sheltering care, and sent repeated exhortations to Abeken, his confidant, who was with the

33) This comparison had already been made by Prince Karl Anton, see above, pp. . The assertion that Gramont's speech caused and excused the stiff and unyielding attitude of Prussia has been disproved by Lord, who publishes a despatch of Bismarck, dated July 5, the day before the speech was made, in which the Chancellor outlines his plan of campaign, and emphasises the necessity of keeping the King from any compromise or concession, and of maintaining a "firm and fearless" attitude. This was before France had taken any steps that could be, by any exaggeration, called violent or irritating. See Lord, No. 16, p. 131.

King. Had he been able to foresee the future, he need not have been anxious. It is true that the King was acting in a way that would have ~~enraged his minister~~, but at the same time it would have been difficult to find any means more likely to irritate and ~~terrify~~ the French government than those which the benevolent old gentleman adopted. They could not credit the statement of the Prussian Foreign Office, that it was totally ignorant of the matter, and yet they could not prove it was false. They could not accept the king's assertion that he had had no concern with the affair except as a private individual. They found it difficult to believe that the hero of the event, Leopold, had vanished into the Alps, and that his own father was unable to communicate with him. In 1866 Leopold's brother had been forbidden by the King to accept the throne of Roumania, and then, with the secret connivance of the government, had gone disguised to Roumania and appeared there as Prince, and all the king's horses and all the king's men had failed to dislodge him from his position. There was nothing to prevent Leopold from making a similar dash for Spain, leaving Prussian king and government to disclaim all knowledge of his doings as blandly as ever. 34)

The King, moved by Werther's report, sent a letter to his cousins, asking what, in the circumstances, they proposed to do --- a step which he carefully concealed from the Chancellor. But at the same time he continued to maintain that he had no connection with the affair as King of Prussia, and when Benedetti dared to hint that the French public might not understand this rigid distinction between his official and unofficial self, he

took the remark as a doubt cast on his veracity, and haughtily said they would have to believe it if he told them so. He absolutely refused either to command or to advise Leopold to withdraw, though he promised to communicate the demands of France to his cousins, and to give his consent to whatever steps they proposed to take. On the afternoon of the 10th he despatched a special messenger to Sigmaringen to see^{59.} Karl Anton, but this step was kept secret, and meantime the situation grew more dangerous. Karl Anton did not answer the King's letter; Leopold was still not to be found; Gramont wrote to Benedetti that if the King of Prussia would not give a definite answer soon public opinion would become too much excited to be held in check; and Bismarck was organising a newspaper campaign against France.

Werther's indiscreet conduct had been exceedingly annoying to the Chancellor, and he was even more perturbed when, on the 10th, the King asked whether he should send^{the} ambassador back to Paris with a friendly personal note for Napoleon, or^{60.} whether it would be advisable to apply for mediation under the Paris Protocol of 1856? Bismarck of course put an instant stop to both these projects; but he seems, before this, to^{have} realised that there was a growing danger of the prince's withdrawal, and to have begun to prepare an alternative scheme. On the 9 he instructed the chargé d'affaires at Paris to take the first opportunity to inform Gramont that, far from giving explanations, Prussia would³⁵⁾ be more likely to demand them, and, under his careful fostering, the warlike and anti-French feeling in the press grew steadily^{61.} in intensity. He telegraphed to Ems urgent warnings that no de-

³⁵⁾ Lord, No. 63, p. 161. Also No. 71, p. 165.

clarations of the Prince addressed to France or Spain should be transmitted through the King or through the royal embassies,"³⁶⁾ and on the evening of the 10th he offered to repair to Ems in person, and the King assented.

Strat, Karl of Roumania's Agent in Paris, now arrived in Sigmaringen, bearing the French threats of revolution in Bucharest, and at the same time came King William's messenger. Karl Anton was very unwilling to ~~give in~~ but the two envoys, and especially "the new danger to his son, had their effect, and after ⁶² one more night of indecision, during which the tension grew, he finally decided to withdraw the candidature in Leopold's name. This news reached King William on ~~10th~~ morning of the 12, but he carefully observed Bismarck's instructions, and on meeting Benedetti in the afternoon only told him that he had learned Leopold's answer would arrive ^{next day} the following morning, and ~~allowed~~³⁷ him to read it in the newspapers the following morning, ~~before~~ before making any reference to it. In Paris the news arrived in the early afternoon, ~~was of 11.12, and~~ ^{of 11.12, and} ~~the~~ Ollivier rushed to the Chambers crying, "Peace! We ⁶³ have succeeded!" and passed the telegram round a group of deputies, while the funds rose from 70 to 72. It was a French victory; but Gramont at once proceeded to ruin everything.

He fully understood Bismarck's views, and had been sure from the beginning that he was using the incident to provoke a war. He had for some days believed that he was being made a fool of, and now, when this unexpected success crowned his ungainly efforts, he was like a man who had flung all his weight against

36) Lord, No. 84, p. 1741

37) King William to Queen Augusta, 12 July, 1870. Fester II, p. 92. See also the same, 13 July 1870, Fester II, p. 118.

a locked door, and finds it not even latched: he lost his balance. He was sure there was some trick. After all, the circumstances were very suspicious. Leopold was 35 years old, able to act by himself, but the withdrawal was made by his father: ~~what~~ what if he repudiated it? Then, the effort to bring the guilt home to the Prussian government had failed---the King maintained his position of having nothing to do with the affair. Suppose Leopold were already on his way to Spain, "unknown" to Prussia?

~~At a council held in the afternoon Gramont set forth his views, and it was decided to~~ With Ollivier's consent, Gramont saw Werther, and induced him to convey to the King the views of the French government. They would be completely satisfied if the King would write to Napoleon, expressing his friendly feelings towards France, and his consent to the prince's withdrawal. This was couched in the form of a suggestion, not a demand. Later on the same day, Gramont and Napoleon, unknown to Ollivier, sent instructions to Benedetti to demand that the King should associate himself with Leopold's withdrawal, and give a guarantee that ~~the~~ candidature would not be renewed. 65

Bismarck had been met by the news of the withdrawal when he arrived in Berlin on his way to Ems, and the disappointment had been poignant. The Hohenzollerns and the King had both failed him. According to himself he meditated resignation, but he soon recovered himself and cast about for some means of repairing the damage. He sent Eulenburg to the King instead of himself, and earnestly urged that no further communication of any sort should be made to Benedetti, and published an announcement that the withdrawal was due to British influence exerted upon the Hohen- 66

zollerns. He also interviewed Gortschakov, who was in Berlin, and, probably, concluded ^{finally} his bargain with Russia. Eulenburg was instructed to prepare the King's mind for a counter-offensive 67. against France, and the newspaper campaign continued.

Gramont's injudicious step gave him the opportunity he needed. Benedetti had received his instructions during the night, and in the morning communicated the demand for a future guarantee, in a conversation, initiated by the King. William refused it as out of the question, but promised the ambassador an interview in the afternoon. The arrival of Eulenburg with Bismarck's instructions induced the King to rescind his promise, and send an adjutant to announce that he had received Karl Anton's letter about the withdrawal. At was at this moment, as Professor Lord 68. has proved, that Abeken sent off a telegram to Bismarck, informing him of all that had occurred. Abeken's account was so worded as to imply that Benedetti had forced himself upon the king, (not, as was the truth, that the King had begun the conversation,) and that William's message was much more rudely worded than was ~~the~~ 38) really the case.

Benedetti replied that he had received new instructions, and pressed for the promised interview, and the King, still by messenger, authorised him to telegraph to Paris that he approved the renunciation, but would give no guarantee for the future. Benedetti still besought his interview, but in the meantime 69. Werther's despatch arrived, and Abeken and Eulenburg represented it to the King as an insolent demand for a personal

38) The King used the expression that he "regarded the affair as now finished." Abeken altered it to "the King has nothing further to say to him." The refusal of an interview which had been promised to a foreign ambassador was in itself a serious step to take.

apology. The King was deeply moved, and sent an absolute refusal to Benedetti, informing him that if he wished further discussions he must approach Bismarck.

The Chancellor received the news of the new French demands in the afternoon, and grasped at once the possibilities ^{offered by} ~~as~~ Gramont's folly. His first step was to interview Augustus Loftus, to whom he blustered and stormed, saying that France had insulted Prussia, and would have to make full amends: she must make an official declaration to the powers of Europe that the prince's withdrawal was sufficient, and that she asked nothing further. If France would not do this, Prussia must have satisfaction from her. This would give a new pretext for forcing a war if France showed signs of a peaceable retreat, but it was dangerous, for on the one hand it might expose Prussia to the accusation of seeking for war, and on the other its success depended on the King's resolute repulse of the new demands. He telegraphed the King, therefore, that he intended to address a summons to France, and begged him to return at once. In the first version he used the word "ultimatum" instead of "summons."³⁹⁾

Moltke and Roon were with him, waiting in suspense, when Abeken's telegram arrived, giving that gentleman's version of the King's dealings with Benedetti, and accompanied by the King's permission to Benedetti to publish it if he liked. The Chancellor saw his chance to clinch the matter. He prepared a condensed version of the despatch, so skilfully that scarcely a word was altered, and yet the impression was conveyed that the King had dismissed the French ambassador with a sharp refusal amounting to a public rebuke, while the fact that the negotiat-

39) "genugthuung von Frankreich fordern." Sybel, VII, p. 239-10.

40) Lord, No. 181, p. 228.

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ions were not ended, but might be renewed through ministerial channels, was suppressed.

"I read it" (the King's message) "out to my guests, whose defection was so great that they turned away from food and drink... I put a few questions to Moltke as to the extent of his confidence in the state of our preparations... He answered that if there was to be war he expected no advantage to us by deferring its outbreak. He regarded a rapid outbreak as, on the whole, more favourable to us than delay...." He then relates how the despatch was condensed.

"The difference in the effect of the abbreviated text of the Ems telegram as compared with that produced by the original was not the result of stronger words but of the form, which made the announcement appear decisive, while Abeken's version would only have been regarded as a fragment of a negotiation still pending, and to be continued at Berlin. After I had read out the concentrated edition to my two guests, Moltke remarked: "Before it was a signal to retreat; now it is a challenge..." This explanation brought about in the two generals a revulsion to a more joyous mood, the liveliness of which surprised me. They had suddenly recovered their pleasure in eating and drinking and spoke in a more cheerful vein. Roon said: "Our God of old lives still and will not let us perish in disgrace." Moltke so far relinquished his passive equanimity that, glancing up joyously towards the ceiling and abandoning his usual punctiliousness of speech, he smote his hand upon his breast and said: "If I may but live to lead our armies in such a war, then the devil may come directly after and fetch away the old carcase." Within a few hours, the telegram, whose publication had been left by the King to Bismarck's discretion, was printed in all the French and German

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The telegram was published that night in all the German papers, and copies of it were sent immediately to the ambassadors of Prussia at foreign courts, with instructions that it was to be communicated at once to the respective governments. In the cases of Britain and Russia, a personal appeal was added, emphasising the fact that Benedetti had insulted the King. A grand~~ly~~ outburst of patriotic indignation was the result throughout Germany. On the morning of the 14th, the King read the telegram in the paper, and remarked, "That is war."

In Paris, in spite of Gramont's extravagance, the tide was ⁷⁶ setting towards peace. The pacific elements, really the stronger though momentarily swamped, were regaining their ascendancy in the government: in the Chambers Thiers was denouncing an iniquitous war. The Cabinet decided to be satisfied if the King of Prussia would merely associate himself with the withdrawal, even if he refused the guarantee. Lyons reported that there was general quiet and hope of peace, until the arrival of the Ems telegram in the morning set all ablaze. ⁴²⁾ The superficial and unhealthy excitement easily aroused in all great capitals broke out in cries for vengeance and shouts of "à Berlin!" A council met at ⁷⁷ once. Gramont and Leboeuf wanted war. The Emperor was in an agony of indecision: he showed them his letters from Franz Josef and Victor Emanuel, stimulating the war party. The peace party, however, gained a momentary success, for they carried a resolution to appeal to Europe before beginning preparations for war; but Gramont induced Ollivier, in spite of this, to call out the reserves. ~~Later in the day a second council met, in the presence~~

42) "I see the public generally suppose that war was a foregone conclusion on the part of France and Prussia. I don't believe it in the case of Prussia, and I know it not to be the fact as regards France. Prussia threw the first stone, by bringing on the Hohenzollern question. France made a peaceful settlement difficult by Gramont's irritating declaration on the 6th. The cause of the change from a mild to an irritating declaration was the arrival of the report from the Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin, that Thiele pooh-poohed the French remonstrance, and said that the question "n'existait pas pour le gouvernement Prussien. Then came the great fault of France in not accepting the renunciation of Hohenzollern as a final settlement; but even at the last moment the declaration of the 16th would have concluded with a phrase leaving the door open to the mediation of a Congress if the article in the North German Gazette had not arrived and convinced the French that Bismarck had decided on war." Lyons, I, p. 305.

Metternich and Vitzthum von Eckstädt visited Gramont, and as they left the room the former said, "It is well you have seen him. You can agree with me now that it is wasted trouble to 78. 44) preach reason to one who has lost his head and is not responsible. In such a state of mind the minister repaired to a later council, held at St Cloud in the presence of the Empress, and without the three ministers who led the peace party. He brought news that Werther had been to see him, and had announced that he had been disavowed by his government, that his despatch conveying the French suggestion for a personal letter was to be regarded as non avenue and that he was ordered to leave Paris immediately 79. on a furlough of indefinite length. This was grave enough in itself, but it was accompanied by the news that everywhere Prussia's ambassadors were officially communicating the Ems telegram to the governments to which they were accredited. It appeared like a deliberate insult, and before the council broke up it had decided on war. While in Germany they were singing "Die Wacht am Rhein," in Paris it was the Marseillaise, and crowds in the streets were shouting "A Berlin!" Both countries mobilised, and Bismarck announced that there was now no alternative between war, and a ^{guarantee} demand from France that ^{she} would withdraw 80. her demands and never again disturb the peace of Europe. On the 19 the French declaration of war was presented at Berlin.

Karl Anton was congratulating himself. By his letter of renunciation, the "dynastic" war had become a "German" war, whereas if he had refused to withdraw, "All South Germany would have left Prussia in the lurch." Strat, he admitted, had persuaded him, "for he too, like everyone in France, has not the remotest

44) Sybel, VII, p. 259.

idea of the overwhelming superiority of our arms. Napoleon has brought about the unity of Germany in twenty-four hours!... God ⁴⁵⁾ has willed it so!" 81

Since the Franco-German War was fought, every successive revelation, every discovery of new evidence, has gone to prove, more and more completely, that the responsibility of the war lies with Bismarck. It has been shown that he had two alternative schemes, and that he had fully prepared the ground for a counter-offensive in the event of the Hohenzollerns withdrawing, and France declaring herself satisfied. But if Bismarck's designs appear the blackest, none of the main actors come off scot free, save possibly the two unfortunate ambassadors, Werther and Benedetti, who here appear as butterflies on the wheel. The reckless folly and vindictive spirit of Gramont, the weakness of Napoleon, and the insane conceit and pugnacity of such men as Leboeuf and the other leaders of the war party in France, were necessary conditions for the success of Bismarck's schemes, and deserve the severest condemnation. The praise, however, which has been lavished on the dignified and pacific attitude of the King of Prussia appears to be somewhat too generous. The attitude of the old man throughout was one of extreme self-righteousness. His object was less to preserve peace than to make certain that he himself could not be blamed for provoking war. His attitude throughout, that he had no official connection with the matter, was quite untenable, and had he really done his utmost to preserve peace, he would have communicated the news of the withdrawal to Benedetti immediately 82.

45) Karl Anton to Karl of Romania, 16 August, 16 August, ~~17~~ 29 August 1870. Fester II, p. 190. 83

and he would not have refused the interview already promised to the ambassador. It may be said that this would have been contrary to the advice of Bismarck, but the King had already disregarded the advice of Bismarck on several important points. He must have been fully aware that in authorising Bismarck to publish the telegram reporting his transactions^N with Benedetti, he greatly intensified the risk of war. Such negotiations, intended to be private, are rife with danger when they are communicated to a public ignorant of diplomatic subtleties; (they are like noxious gases that must be kept corked up in test tubes. The mere publication of the telegram, quite apart from Bismarck's editing, was a risk. The King's attitude was in fact insincere throughout, and the pitiful^{subterfuge} to which he resorted in the course of the affair is typical of his whole conduct. He, at least, knew almost the whole truth⁴⁶⁾ of the affair, and he deliberately allowed himself to be hoodwinked by Bismarck, and to be jockeyed into a war which, in the course of a few days, he persuaded himself was the will of the supreme God.

46) See Lord for account of ~~the~~ disgraceful transactions regarding the despatch, no. 218, p. 249.

Chap. V Section II

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II

The most part of the events just related were known only to the Prussian and Spanish agents immediately employed in them. In France, the government and people, their eyes sharpened by enmity, suspected an intrigue. In Great Britain, public opinion was incredulous of any such underhand dealings, and regarded the wild accusations hurled by Gramont at Prussia as merely ridiculous.

The press had begun by treating the whole affair with contempt. "We decline to be startled at anything connected with Spanish politics," said the Times, "Nothing happens in Spain but the unexpected, and the succession of surprises is fatiguing... Here is Prim, with another King, just found, and, as it appears,

very neatly caught... A prince of Hohenzollern, with a great many names, the first of which is Leopold.... belongs to the class of Prince which it is the special province of Germany to produce... There is generally some person to whom the popular imagination ~~ascribes~~ superhuman astuteness, and the French have^{87.} seen the hand of the Machiavellian Bismarck in every unexpected event since Sadowa.... We do not pretend that these jealousies are founded on reason---far from it; and we are, moreover, confident that a King of Spain would govern for Spain herself, and not with a view to foreign interests."^{(47) (11)}

The attitude of the government was much the same as that of press and public. They took for granted that France was responsible for this new disturbance of the peace, for ^{she} France was the power that wanted war, ~~France had an overwhelmingly strong army, well-equipped, efficient, ready to take the field at a few weeks notice. Germany, on the other hand, was afraid of France, and had no love for war as such: the German army was inferior to the French, and was not well adapted to action beyond the frontiers of Germany, though it was an admirable force for defence. and they~~ That France had any legitimate grievance, ~~was not admitted in British political circles.~~ The ^{new} attitude ~~of the government~~ was^{88.} one of righteous self-satisfaction. They had always refused to allow English princes to start upon doubtful enterprises of this sort, and could ostentatiously exhibit their hands clean of any such unholy ambitions; and they were also, they claimed, superior to such petty jealousies. They did not believe that Leopold, as a constitutional king, would have any opportunity to ^{direct} ~~direct~~ the policy of Spain in the interests of Prussia---though the position of "Times". 6. July 1870.

tion of affairs in Spain, where constitutional government was in its infancy, was hardly ~~also~~ similar to that in England as they imagined. Napoleon was connected by marriage with the house of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, and they apparently believed that this fact would have more influence on Leopold than his German patriotism. They did not believe ^{the} French assertions that Bismarck had prepared the candidature, and readily accepted his statement that the affair did not exist for the Prussian government. They had not sufficient imagination to place themselves in the position of their French neighbours: it was a matter of complete indifference to Granville and Gladstone who sat on the throne of Spain, and they could not understand that it was one of much more intimate concern to France: yet ~~twenty~~ years before Great Britain had been within an ace of declaring war on France, because she had broken an agreement and married one of her princes to the heir-presumptive of the Spanish crown. Had it been Prince Napoleon, not Leopold of Hohenzollern, who was Prim's fancy, we may guess that their attitude would have been less placidly superior. Had it been proposed to place a French prince on the throne of Belgium, it is easy to imagine the snow-storm of despatches, the frenzy of the press, and the cry that Belgian independence was about to be annihilated.

Granville from the first took up the attitude of regarding the whole affair as a storm in a tea-cup. He blamed Prussia for having entered upon such a course, when she knew well the exaggerated sensibilities, the tetchiness, the vanity, of France; and so far he upheld France, that he consented to advise Prussia to

conciliate her: but he refused to admit that France had any right to ~~interfere~~ in the matter, and told her that she was a fool to think twice of such a trifle, with the indulgent scorn of a nurse to a child who takes the moon looking in at the window for a bogey. He admired the position of complete indifference taken up by the Prussian government, and did not doubt that their wish to keep the peace would lead them to abandon the foolish enterprise. 92.

"I have expressed regret at an occurrence which had at all events given rise to great excitement in the Imperial government and French nation; but I have carefully abstained from admitting that the cause was sufficient to warrant the intentions which had been announced," he wrote; and later, "I was always of opinion that the French government had exaggerated the danger ~~of~~ which the candidature of the prince of Hohenzollern could cause to so powerful a nation as that of France." 93.

The remonstrance to Prussia was couched in the same tone, and as a sign of how seriously the government took the matter, it may be mentioned that the despatch containing it, though dated July 6th, was not sent off till the 9th, as they did not find it convenient to summon a cabinet meeting sooner. Granville told Prussia that to her "it can be an object of no importance that a member of the House of Hohenzollern should be called to the throne of the most Catholic country in Europe... Success could add but little to the dignity of the ~~Prussian~~ Royal Family...or to the power of North Germany, while the want of it could not fail to be a painful incident..... You will be careful to say 94.

Granville to Lyons, letters 9---13 July, Bluebook.
Gladstone, P-326 footnote.

nothing which could give ground for the supposition that H.M. Government controvert, or even discuss, the abstract right of Spain in the choice of her own Sovereign. For your own information I may add that we have not in any measure admitted that the assumption of the Spanish throne by Prince Leopold would justify the immediate resort to arms of France. On this topic, however, you are not at present to enter into communication with the Prussian Government." He adds that the secrecy with which the proceedings had been conducted by Spain (not by Prussia) had been very unfriendly to France. 95

To Bernstorff he was more frank. "Lord Granville," reported the ambassador, "was for the rest very mild and far removed from threatening, but said to me in confidence, that he was convinced from all he heard that France would in the end make war on us!" (27) 96
 This was on the 8th, when the government had begun to take the matter more seriously.

Fr. Though Lyons had reported that he did not believe "that either the Emperor or his Ministers either wish for war or expect it," the home government had by now begun to suspect that France was simply making use of this trifling affair as a pretext for a war already determined on. It was the inevitable outcome of their views of French policy, and Bismarck did his best to strengthen it, assuring Loftus that however many concessions Prussia might make, new difficulties would be raised in Paris, for the Spanish incident was only being used as a pretext for war. 97.

Granville to Loftus, 6.7.70, Bluebook. (52) Bernstorff to Bismarck, 8.7.70, Rheindorf. (52) Lyons to Granville, 7.7.70, Bluebook. July p. 163. (52)

On the 9th of July Italy proposed to Great Britain a joint intervention of the four neutral powers to relieve the tension of the situation, and Austria associated herself with Italy's proposal. Granville, ~~however~~, though he had on the previous day told Bernstorff that some such action might be necessary, refused the offer. The time was not yet come, he said, when such a proceeding could be of use.

The voluntary renunciation of Prince Leopold was hailed ~~in~~ Britain, ~~as in France~~, with great relief; and Gramont's subsequent proceedings caused great indignation. The government took this as a final proof that France had been determined on war from the beginning, and had only used the candidature as a pretext. Gladstone, on the first news of the renunciation, had expressed himself strongly to Bernstorff.

"He expressed himself in his frank and honest way so decidedly about the behaviour^y of France in all this matter that not the slightest doubt remained to me that he had regarded her from the beginning with the utmost surprise and disapproval ~~in respect~~ of the form and tone of her attitude, and that he, although he does not deny to her a certain justification with regard to the opposition to the choice of a Hohenzollern prince for the Spanish throne, would learn with the greatest displeasure that the French government was not satisfied with the withdrawal of the hereditary prince, and was demanding yet more explanations and concessions from the government of H. M. the King. He said to me that I knew he had attached a great value to the Anglo-French Alliance, and that he did so especially because he believed that the two nations together would not easily commit an

act of injustice; but if one of them did so all the same then it would be certain that the other would separate itself from it; this would be the case if France committed the wrong of making war on Prussia after the excuse for it had been removed. He seemed, for the rest, to fear that this would happen, and observed that he did not indeed believe that all the members of the French government wished for war but that the Emperor (the great puller of the wires) ⁽⁵³⁾⁽¹¹⁾ seemed to wish it... ~~(Upon my remark that the present incident even though it did not lead to war would at least have the good result that it would not leave us the slightest doubt as to the animus of the French government against us,)~~ the English Premier ~~replied agreeing with me, and~~ then said with praiseworthy frankness, he had certainly last winter, when the confidential correspondence about the disarmament plan took place between us, had the opinion that the Emperor Napoleon had placed himself in a better position than us--- which proves to me that the proposal made at that time by Lord Clarendon was inspired by Louis Napoleon in order to place ~~us~~ at a disadvantage---but admitted, when I replied quickly that the present events clearly justified our opposition at that time, without contradiction, the correctness of this statement. Even if nothing else can be inferred from this interview than that the English government will stand with all its moral weight on our side if France makes war on us now, still this is of a considerable value to us." ⁽²⁷⁾⁽⁵⁴⁾

Later in the same day, when the news of the French demands had arrived, Bernstorff telegraphed: "Mr Gladstone... is of the

English in original. ⁽⁵⁴⁾ Bernstorff to Bismarck, 13.7.70, Rheindorf. ^{July} P. 164

opinion, that we have gone to the uttermost verge of conciliation, and that France will be flagrantly in the wrong, if in spite of this she begins war." (55) (II)

Upon the same day Brunnow called on Granville to present a proposal from Gortschakov, that the powers should make a joint declaration that by the withdrawal of Leopold the Spanish Question was solved and the difference between France and Prussia at an end. This, it was hoped, might save the dignity of both parties, while exercising a soothing effect. Granville refused. His motive is unknown, for the reasons afterwards given by Gladstone in Parliament are obviously mere excuses. Gladstone said that Brunnow acted as a private individual only; and that at the time Granville did not know whether the withdrawal of Leopold would not be regarded by France as satisfactory. In reality, Brunnow was acting under the official instructions of Gortschakov; and as to the second point, if France had declared herself content, the plan could easily have been dropped, though even then the Russian proposal would have given an additional security against a repetition of the events of 1866. Probably Granville's action was due to a desperate instinctive clinging to the policy of Non-Intervention, an unwillingness to be dragged into joint action, however mild, with any other powers, and a vague dislike and distrust of Russia's motives. (It is possible,

July
[1] Bernstorff to Bismarck 13.7.70, Fester, II, 131.
Gladstone was at first doubtful. "On the face of the facts France is wrong, but as to personal trustworthiness the two moving spirits on the respective sides, Napoleon and Bismarck, are nearly on a par." But he was soon convinced that France was the culprit and later wrote of her "feverish determination to force a war."
Gladstone, pp. 327, 338.

that it was at this time that the proposal was made, referred to on p. 34, and that Granville in haste returned an unqualified refusal to both plans. In any case the fact that he declined to adopt either this or the Italian plan lays him and his colleagues open to the accusation of not doing all that they might have done in the interests of peace. 105.

Granville's conduct of the affair was throughout remarkably inefficient. He could not bring himself to adopt any definite course, though strong action on almost any one line might have had a fair chance of success. He was afraid to compromise himself in any way. He began by irritating both parties by treating as a trifle a matter of the gravest consequence to them. He forwarded the complaints of France, while refusing to admit their justice; he advised Prussia to make concessions, which at the same time he allowed her to understand that he did not think France had any right to ask for them. At the same time he refused to cooperate with the other neutral powers in taking measures to enforce peace on both the disputants. This feeble and shuffling policy seems to have been due, in part, to fear of giving offence to either of the great military powers, but in a greater degree to fear of involving his country, either in continental squabbles or in continental alliances. He did not wish to undertake (any obligations, to undertake) interference that might have to be backed by threats, or to pledge his government to collective action with other powers, (and) especially with Russia. 106.

The government had been taken by surprise. They had little time to consider their course of action, and were quite unpre-

pared. ~~(They dared not take any step, for fear that they might afterwards repent it and wish to withdraw.)~~ Both France and Germany afterwards made the accusation, that Britain in 1870 could have prevented war if she had liked to do so. By definitely adopting the side of either of the parties, she could at least have postponed the outbreak of war for the time being; and by an understanding with the other neutral powers, and the enforcement of collective arbitration on both the rivals, she would have assisted in the formation of an authoritative opinion in Europe, which might have succeeded in preventing war altogether, ~~by~~ ^{encouraging} letting France and Germany understand that their squabbles would not longer be tolerated by their neighbours, and so ~~(offering an opportunity)~~ ^{for} the peaceful elements in both states to win the ascendancy over the disturbing forces represented by Bismarck and by Napoleon. 108.

(miss one line only)

~~The apparent determination of France to force a war on Germany had set~~ Public opinion in Great Britain generally against ^{France} ~~her~~. The "Times", still the weightiest organ of opinion, had persistently disseminated the view that the trouble was entirely due to ^{her} ~~the~~ unreasoning jealousy ~~of France~~.

"If France could forego her jealousy of Prussia there is really no reason why she should fear the establishment of this Prince at Madrid... Leopold of Spain would probably be just as good a Spaniard and as faithful an ally of France as if he came 109.

from Austria or Italy... The truth is that there is an immense body in France that would be too glad of any excuse for a war with Prussia." ⁽¹⁷⁾

Prussia, on the other hand, was praised for her "imperturbable calmness" which has "removed all suspicions" ⁽¹⁷⁾ that her concessions might be prompted by undignified motives."

~~Delane was convinced that France would be victorious in case of war; only one event, he wrote, would make him believe that Prussia could defeat France; but nevertheless he was unsparing in his editorial denunciations.~~ "The greatest national crime that we have had the pain of recording in these columns since the days of the first French Empire has been consummated," The "Times" announced on the 16th, "War is declared---an unjust, ~~but~~ premeditated war. ⁽¹⁷⁾ ~~This dire calamity, which overwhelms Europe with dismay, is, it is now too clear, the act of France---of one man in France.~~ Benedetti's demand "Was a slap in the face given with the left hand, while the fight is already on the hand of the sword...It is now too evident that nothing short of an amount of humiliation to which no powerful nation could submit would have given Prussia a chance of escape... Whatever may have been on former occasions the offences of Prussia, she will in this instance have on her side all that moral support which is seldom denied to those who take up arms in self-defence." ^{(54) (17)}

The press as a whole followed the lead of the "Times". The "News" ^{(57) (12)} said France had committed a crime against civilisation. The "Spectator" ^{(53) (5)} said France had forced Germany into war through an unparalleled series of insults. So universal was the indignation that the German residents in London summoned a public meeting

⁽⁵⁷⁾ "Times", 9th, 15th, 16th July. ⁽⁵⁷⁾ "Daily News", 16. 70. July
⁽⁵³⁾ "Spectator", 16, 70. July 1870.

and passed a resolution of gratitude to the English Press for its sympathy with Prussia.

Bismarck knew when to strike. When the feeling against France was at its height, he published the still-born projet du traité 112. of 1866 regarding Belgium, which the trustful Benedetti had left in his hands.

Bernstorff was eager to revive his plans of the previous year and promote an alliance between Britain and Prussia, and Bismarck would not neglect the chance of winning the island power as an ally; in any case, he would ensure that she should cherish no lingering sympathies for France. The chance that she would enter the war was very small, but he would have asked very little from her---only that her fleet should prevent the French from attacking the North German coast, and protect Prussia's merchandise and her baby war-ships; if she even sent a few troops to Antwerp it would serve to alarm France and distract her attention. 113.

Bernstorff communicated the treaty secretly to Granville: but Bismarck was not satisfied with the impression made. The government were thoroughly scared, but they were pledged to a policy of peace, and besides, part of their fear was that Prussia might try to make peace with France and buy her off by reviving the plan. Old Lord Russell said, "They would come in by and by." This was not enough, and before a week had elapsed Bismarck sent the treaty to the "Times" office, where Delane jumped at the chance of such a "scoop." The treaty appeared in the issue of the 25th. In order to produce a still greater effect, Bismarck 114.
 It is evident to me that C. Bismarck will use all his endeavours to obtain the cooperation of England and he hopes by

altered the date of the document from the period of the Peace of Frankfort to that just following the Luxembourg Incident in 1867, thus imparting a darker tinge to the disgraceful transaction by making it appear that France had proposed this scheme when she failed of obtaining Luxembourg, and immediately after she had guaranteed the neutrality of the duchy. He hoped in this way to arouse a popular indignation that would force the government to abandon its lackadaisical attitude. 115

It almost seemed that the device had succeeded, so fierce and so wide-spread was the feeling aroused. Gramont before this had voluntarily given the assurance that France would observe the neutrality of Belgium, unless it were violated by Prussia; and before entering the war, the French government had publicly declared that, whatever success she might obtain, France would make no annexations: but these declarations were forgotten or discredited. The "Times" had already told its readers that in spite of fair words France was fighting for the Rhine, and now that paper actually went so far as to assert that the infamous projet had been offered to King William at Ems as a means of buying off France, and that this was the third time of making the offer, the ⁽⁶⁹⁾second having been on the eve of the Belgian Railways crisis. Whether Delane or Bismarck was responsible for this outrageous falsehood is unknown, but there is ~~on this point~~ no evidence against Bismarck. 116

(ctd.) representing the dangers with which Belgium is menaced to work on public opinion in England, with a view to the eventual aid of Great Britain in the war against France." Loftus to Granville, 30, 4, 70, Bluebook. The curious but not inapt mixture of geographical terms is that used by Loftus.

"Times" 26th + 26th Jul 1870.

The somewhat confused protests of Benedetti, that Bismarck had offered^V Belgium to France, went for nothing; was not the treaty 117. in his handwriting? while Bismarck said that he had been too much stupefied with amazement and horror to reply to Benedetti, and that he had even been relieved to find the atrocious ambitions of France directed to other quarters than the Rhine.

Both government and people in Britain were peculiarly sensitive upon the subject of Belgium. The consciousness of an obligation to fight for Belgium, and a fear of being called on to fulfil that obligation, filled every heart with fury against any who threatened Belgian neutrality. Bismarck's bomb failed of its full effect,^V for, though it turned the balance of opinion 118. against France, it produced, not a cry for war, but a demand that the government should ~~avoid the necessity~~ for war by providing safeguards for Belgium. French troops across the Frontier might have brought Britain into^{ks} _^ war on Germany's side, but the mere suggestion of this possibility was not enough. Perhaps the most useful effect of the announcement for Prussia was that the Opposition, hitherto inclined to the side of France, changed their tactics, and preferred to attack the government for failing to provide adequate protection for Belgium, though Disraeli did go so far as to recall that^V in 1815 we had guaranteed the 119. Rhineland to Prussia.

The government were puzzled to find some means of satisfying the general demand. They were quite decided that if the rival powers made peace on the **basis** of the Benedetti treaty, there was nothing to be done. Gladstone expressed himself on this point with less than his usual ambiguity.

"The sole or single-handed defence of Belgium would be an enterprise which we incline to think quixotic; if these two great military powers combined against it---that combination is the only serious danger."
(61) (17)

If sure of one ally at least, they were ready to ^{keep} fulfil their engagements, though Bright used all his influence against this decision, and protested against any steps being taken to fulfil the treaty of guarantee, whether against France or against Germany. But it was not till the last necessity arose that they would make preparations, or take any steps that might be called threatening. Gladstone considered the problem of sending troops to Antwerp if French troops invaded Belgium, but he threw cold water on all the practical proposals submitted by the War Office. When the danger was there, he wrote, he would begin to consider the means of averting it. Still it was necessary to do something to quiet public agitation, and they hit upon the idea, at last, of a fresh guarantee. 120.

Proposals were to be laid before France, Germany, and the neutral powers, that all should sign a new engagement to respect the neutrality of Belgium. What effect this proceeding could have, beyond throwing a doubt on the validity of the Treaty of 1839, was known only to the devisers of the scheme. Possibly 121.

they considered that the value of a promise is increased by the number of times it is repeated. The best¹²² that can be said of the arrangement is that it calmed popular excitement, and found some occupation for Granville's idle hands.

The belligerent powers were ready enough to sign. Lyons was "really ashamed to speak to him (Gramont) about our treaty, but I thrust your despatch on him," and the minister answered with a desperate hilarity, "N'ayez pas peur, nous n'avons pas grande envie d'entrer en Belgique en ce moment." ^{(63) (11)} Prussia, still hoping for an ally, was equally amenable. The neutral powers were less eager to please, and Russia and Austria refused their signatures; Russia because a new guarantee was unnecessary, Austria because ¹²³ she would not fight for Belgium.

The government were well aware how transient was the excitement that could be aroused in England by questions of external policy: ~~they feared to fight~~, they did not want to fight, and they counted on Granville's harmless scheme to tide them over a momentary difficulty. Their confidence was justified. In a few days calm was restored in Britain, and in Germany anger and disappointment reigned. The bid for alliance had been useless, and there was a general outburst of hostility to Britain.

"We are apparently unable to think of anything except Belgium and ourselves," wrote Morier, "...Oh the fools, the fools! ¹²⁴.... Do they not see that it is Germany with its best blood defending the integrity of Belgium whilst we are making speeches at the Mansion House? Can they not for one moment realise what the real issues at stake are? France draws the sword to assert her political preponderance over Europe. Germany draws the sword to ass-

ert her national existence. But the result will be that the preponderance of Germany over Europe for centuries to come will take the place of French preponderance. We sit by like a bloated Quaker, too holy to fight, but rubbing our hands at the roaring trade we are driving in cartridges and ammunition. We are heaping up to ourselves the undying hatred of this German race that will henceforth rule the world, because we cannot muster up courage enough to prevent a few cursed Brummagem manufacturers from driving their unholy trade." (64) (11)

Having made themselves unpopular in Germany by refusing to join in the war, and by selling munitions to France, the government proceeded to make themselves unequally unpopular in France ~~---where the tone of the press, especially the "Times," was already bitterly resented---~~ by pressing upon Gramont the Prussian complaints about alleged violations of the Red Cross, etc, by French troops. These complaints, if not settled between the respective commanders-in-chief, should have been preferred by the minister of the United States, who had undertaken Prussia's affairs in Paris, so that Granville's action gave the impression of being solely due to a desire to make himself unpleasant, and Lyons was obliged to send a startled protest home. 126.

~~(So the country fulfilled the proverbial part of the neutral.)~~

(so straight on to next page)

August
(11) Morier to Mallet, 9.8.70. Morier vol II .p.165 (65) The commercial classes were admirably neutral; in August and September they supplied munitions to France, and in October and November to Prussia.

A.A.W. Ramsay.
Chap. V.

The general expectation in Great Britain was of a speedy victory for France; the best the friends of Germany hoped was that she would, with time, be able to rally her forces and drive the enemy back across the frontier.

"France brings an army into the field, Prussia ~~only~~ an armed people," said the "Times", "...There will be hard fighting on the Rhine, in the Baltic, or it may be in the heart of Germany." (65) (11) 127.

"There is little doubt," wrote Morier, "That the Prussians are not yet ready, and that a great portion of Germany will be occupied...before the decisive battle is fought, which will be somewhere in the interior of Germany." (12) (67)

No one, outside Prussia, knew how exact were the preparations made there: how every by-path in France was mapped; how Moltke had examined the frontier on foot from end to end; how the precise breadth of the rivers between the Rhine and Paris had been calculated, and materials for bridging them of the correct length collected. The shock of what was to come was all the greater. The first emotion was surprise that the French were so slow; weeks passed, and not a French soldier across the Rhine! What was happening? August brought the answer, and as the tale of French disasters came thick and fast---Weissenberg, Wörth, Spicheren, Borny, Mars-la-Tour, Gravelotte---stupefaction reigned in London. Realising at last that the ~~bogety~~ of French military domination was laid for good and all, the Government heaved a sigh of relief, and entered upon a more ambitious policy---what

they called "limiting the area of hostilities."
(64) "Times" 22 July 70, 3 Aug 70. (67) (12) Morier II p 54. 129.

Both belligerent powers entered the arena alone, but both had hoped to be able to find allies. Bismarck had **tried** to engage Spain in the struggle, and had even had some hopes of assistance from Britain. In both cases he was disappointed, but a useful friend remained: **Russia**, though she did not enter the field, rendered him yeoman service.

Napoleon, it will be ^{remembered} ~~remembered~~ had encouraged his ministers to think that France might count on the help of Italy and Austria. In reality, **neither** of these powers was pledged, though ^{both} ~~each~~ looked with goodwill on the cause of France. Had Napoleon consented to abandon the Pope, there is little doubt that Italy would have stood by ~~the~~ side of France; but clerical **influence** was still too strong. Not till ^{after} the first disasters of the war were the French troops recalled from Rome, and then it was too late. Napoleon, in despair, wrote to Victor Emanuel, recalling old friendship, ~~asking nothing~~. The King, considerably moved, called his counsellors, and showed the letter. La Marmora said, if the king decided to go to war, he would beg permission to lead a company; but if asked as a statesman, he must answer that it would be madness for Italy to forsake her neutrality; and he left the room in tears. They decided for peace; and when the news of Sedan came---"Pauvre Empereur!---mais je l'ai échappé belle!" said the king. 130.

In Austria, Beust, always the Sir Uwayne-les-Adventurous of the day, was eager to risk it; ~~(he was thirsting for revenge on Russia)~~ but the Emperor was afraid, and Andrassy, who was in correspondence with Bismarck, spoke for peace, and carried the 131.

rest of the council with him. The matter was clinched by a declaration from Russia that she would be neutral, but that if Austria entered the war on the side of France, she would join Prussia. 132

For one more ally France had hoped---Denmark, where feeling against Germany was naturally very strong. There was a plan for a joint naval attack on the North German coast; but Bismarck allowed it to be known that if Denmark joined France, and Prussia were victorious, Jutland would be annexed; and both Russia and Britain put pressure on Denmark to remain neutral. Notwithstanding that it proved a lucky escape for Denmark, France naturally 133 looked on British action there as unfriendly.

~~Once they had decided for neutrality, most of the~~

Once their decision was taken, most of the neutral powers became anxious to give what help they could to France in the way of mediation or good offices. The first German victories filled them with consternation, and they instinctively turned 68) for guidance to Britain.

At the beginning of the war, the Italian government had proposed to Britain a league of the Neutral powers, and had been at once refused, on account of the difficulty of the

68) "I have been beset with representatives of small powers, all except the Belgian, in consternation, and with Rothschild's and other bankers in despair. They hope England will interfere to stop the Prussian army on its way to Paris; not an easy task."... Lyons to Granville, 8 August 1870. Lyons, I, p. 306.

(11) undertaking. This was followed in a few days by a similar proposal from Russia for "a real solidarity between the neutral powers during the present war," which had the same fate. On the day of the Battle of Worth Italy renewed the offer, **suggesting** an understanding between herself, Austria, and Britain, and was again refused; but three days later, on the 9th, the Government in London changed their minds, and consented to a new ^{arrangement,} ~~plan,~~ by which neither power should take any step affecting the neutrality of other powers, or undertake anything in the nature of mediation, without the knowledge of the other. **T**he remaining neutrals were to be invited to join.

Russia immediately acceded to the League. Spain joined on August 19th, Turkey on August 24th, and Denmark on September 6th. Beust at first delayed, wishing to make Austria's accession conditional: he proposed that the League should immediately declare that its object was a joint mediation, and that each power should guarantee that it would not mediate alone. Britain refused to agree to this, and Austria finally joined unconditionally on September 16th.

The motives of the various parties who entered the League of Neutrals (~~as it soon came to be called~~) were contradictory.

Granville and his colleagues had as object "to limit the area of hostilities." The aims of the other powers were much more definite, and much more aggressive, ~~(than this)~~. It may in fact be said that with the exception of Great Britain, all the members

According to Schweinitz, Prussian ambassador at Vienna, this Italian proposal was inspired by Russia. See Rheindorf, p. 179.

League believed that it was meant to undertake a collective mediation: Italy proposed it, and the other powers joined, under this belief.

There was nothing in the terms of the League as finally accepted by Granville or in his conduct of affairs up to its foundation to give the lie to this. In past times the prestige of Great Britain had stood much higher on the continent than it now did; but still no one supposed that, in a crisis of this magnitude, a first-rate power would remain in a state of languor and impotence, and allow herself to be ignored by the actors in the drama. Both in Britain and abroad it was the general belief that the country would demand to have some voice in the settlement of affairs, and that the startling news which was daily arriving from the battle-front must necessarily modify her policy. The conduct of the government had already given a hint that they were prepared for strong action if necessary, for Gladstone on August 2nd had asked and received a Vote of Credit for £2,000,000 for military and naval purposes. The mere formation of the League seemed to promise action. Why enter into such an engagement at all, if it were not to be directed to some definite object? There had been great wars in Europe before, but no one had troubled to found a Neutral League. Austria and Italy had not considered that Granville's aim might be simply to restrain the other powers from action: they thought that the losses of France had alarmed Britain like themselves, and that her object was the same as their own---a joint mediation to prevent the too great success of Prussia, and the destruction of the balance of power in Europe.

Russia had other motives, though she also believed that collective action was intended. Gortschakov hoped that the League would propose a European Congress to decide upon the terms of peace, and there he intended to introduce the Eastern Question.

Russia, in fact, was loyal to neither party, and ~~was~~ playing for her own hand. The extent of Prussian success alarmed her. She had no desire to see France reduced to a third-rate power and a Prussian Germany dominating Europe. That was too dangerous to herself. Often the ally of Prussia in the past, Russia had ¹⁴⁰ yet never fully trusted her.

"That for the Russian policy there is a limit," wrote Bismarck later, "Beyond which the importance of France in Europe must not be decreased is explicable. That limit was reached, as I believe, at the Peace of Frankfort---a fact which in 1870 and 1871 was not so completely realised at Petersburg as five years later. I hardly think that during our war the Russian cabinet clearly foresaw that, when it was over, Russia would have as neighbour so strong and consolidated a Germany." ^{(79) (11)}

Though not "completely realised," yet enough of this was understood at Petersburg as to make the government uneasy. The Tsar was much attached to King William, but the bonds of affection which united Gortschakov to Bismarck were distinctly less close. Russia was determined to use this opportunity to obtain the revision of the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of 1856; but various means to doing this were open to her. Gortschakov loved a Congress; and to introduce the subject there was less risky and less likely to produce a quarrel than the course which he ultim-

ately adopted. If he could bribe Britain and France to consent 142.
to the abrogation of these clauses, by giving them just sufficient support against Prussia as to save France from complete defeat and set bounds to Prussian ambition, then he would gain the coveted prize with less danger to Russia, and at the same time would prevent Prussia from becoming too dangerously strong. Either way, he meant to get rid of the obnoxious treaty; but he would risk as little as possible. If he simply repudiated ~~it~~, there was always a chance that Britain might go to war, and he preferred not to fight unless it was necessary.

Gortschakov's new policy rested on a misconception, however. 143.
He hoped that Britain might be ready to buy Russian support at a price, but did not understand that there was no desire in London to obtain the goods offered for sale. There they had not begun to realise the magnitude of the change which had overtaken Europe: they had no intention of stepping forth in defence of the balance of power, and as yet no desire to mitigate the ~~the~~ distress of France.

Either at this time, or just before the declaration of war, must have occurred the incident referred to later by Sir Charles 144.
Dilke. "It is the fact," he wrote, "That Austria and Russia both, but independently, proposed to us at London through Baron Brunnow, and at Vienna through Count Beust to stop the outbreak of war between France and Germany by guaranteeing to both parties their territory.... The negotiations did not indeed break down upon the merits of the proposal, but upon the mooted more or less directly by Russia at the same time of the question of the

(70) (11)
Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of 1856."

When Gortschakov finally understood that neither the misfortunes of France nor the triumphs of Prussia would be sufficient to alarm Great Britain, but that she still considered the limitations on Russian sovereignty on the Black Sea coasts more important than the balance of European power, he reverted to his original policy of unlimited support of Prussia and a bold disregard of international law. He held his hand until he was fully convinced of the feebleness and timidity of the Gladstone administration, and then he struck.

On his side, Granville had forwarded the formation of the Neutral League largely as a means of restraining Russia. It is not to be insinuated or believed that the attitude of the British government was hypocritical. They were sincerely desirous of limiting the area of hostilities, and so preserving the rest of Europe from the horrors of war. ~~Their humanity~~ ~~though erratic and one-sided with them as it is with most persons~~ ~~was sincere as far as it went, and they truly abhorred war~~ Nor was the League, as France believed then, and as some French writers have since tried to prove, directed against France. There was certainly a strong feeling in the government that France had made her bed and ought to lie on it, there may even have been a certain amount of sour satisfaction at the first Prussian victories, and there was relief that French armies were not, after all, invincible. It is true, too, that they meant to use the League as a

(11) "Present Position of European Politics" p.6. By the courtesy of Mr C.R.M. Cruttwell I am informed that there is no reference to this proposal preserved in the official Foreign Office papers.

means of restraining possible intervention in favour of France. Bernstorff had reported: "Your Excellency will see from this, that England of all the powers is doing us the greatest service, in holding back other powers from taking part in the war against us." It is, however, in Bernstorff's letter of the previous day that we find the key to Granville's policy. The ambassador had been instructed to complain that it was generally believed on the continent that the Neutral League ~~was~~ aimed at a joint mediation. Granville contradicted to Bernstorff ~~this~~ tendency of the coalition, rather ^{suggesting} offering an English mediation. "According to him the league will only serve to hinder possible tricks (Extratouren) on the part of powers not involved in the war." 148. (72) (114) (11)

The power whose "possible tricks" were to be hindered was Russia. The British government were well aware of the danger that Russia might demand the revising ^{on} of the Black Sea treaty, or even something more, and they hardly knew how to prevent it. For this reason they were strongly opposed to a collective mediation, that, if successful, would lead to a Congress or Conference, and "at the council-table, Russia would bring forward the question of the Black Sea. It is a remarkable proof of the incapacity of the government, their confused outlook and inability to grasp the situation, that at the moment when the fate of Europe for the next generations was being settled, they could think of nothing beyond the danger of Russia's freeing herself from these ridiculous restrictions; of which Bismarck said later: "They were

the most inept conclusions of the peace of Paris. One cannot permanently deny the exercise of the natural rights of sovereignty on its own coasts to a nation of one hundred millions of inhabitants. (13) ~~(11)~~ For three months the whole endeavours of the government were directed towards this single object, to which every other was subordinated, and their endeavours completely and signally failed. 150.

Russia's first announcement, that her ~~neutrality~~ neutrality depended on the conduct of Austria, had thoroughly alarmed them. Thus they wished to prevent the entrance of the neutral powers into the war, because if Italy joined Austria would join, and if Austria joined, then Russia would attack her, and once Russian troops entered the Slavonic provinces of Austria the fat would be in the fire. A European conflagration would be unavoidable. Turkey 151. and the Balkans would be in the thick of it, and Britain might against her will be dragged into another catastrophe like that of the Crimea. Once Russia began to fight, she would not stop without having obtained some compensation, for that she would overcome Austria they could not doubt.)

On the other hand, if a peace conference met, Russia could sell her support to the highest bidder, and bribe either France or Prussia to ~~give~~ her a free hand in the East.

By using the League to prevent either intervention or mediation, they hoped to do away with both these dangers. 152.

This policy was short-sighted, for it left out of count the possibility that Russia might attain her wish by simply repudiating the treaty without either going to war or asking the con-

sent of Europe. If the Black Sea clauses were to be annulled, it was better that they should be annulled by general consent, and not by Russia defying international law and denouncing the treaty. By preventing Russia from taking legal action, they encouraged ^{her} to take illegal action. It was ^{unlikely} ~~improbable~~ that this great empire, which for years had fretted over the ^{se} humiliating restrictions, would let this unequalled chance pass by without seizing it. To this pitiful policy of postponing the evil day the British government chose to subordinate all other considerations, though the longer that they succeeded in maintaining this policy of inaction, and imposing it on the other neutrals, the greater became the very danger which they sought to avoid. The weaker that France became, so much the stronger ^{was} ~~grew~~ Russia, if she ^{wished} ~~determined~~ to defy the Western Powers. The more complete the success of Prussia was, the more dangerous would it be for Britain to intervene between Russia and her desires. Seeing France so reduced, they saw the destruction of a possible ally against Russia, and their policy was self-destructive. 153.

Hitherto British policy had been largely determined by fears of what France might do; now that all necessity for this had vanished, they stood bewildered. The fixed and inapprehensive character of their minds was slow to receive ^{new} impressions, and when these impressions were so **forcible** that they could not be rejected, the result was at first confusion and disturbance---a general dislocation of thought-processes. In this state of bewilderment, the idea of Non-Intervention was a fixed star above the troubled waters. It offered an excuse for inaction, when 154.

they could not decide what action was necessary. It was an old familiar idea, and it covered with a sounding name the lassitude and weakness into which they allowed themselves to sink. Non-Intervention they fervently proclaimed their ruling principle.

It would have been difficult to find a policy more likely to offend all their neighbours. France, too much absorbed in her own difficulties to analyse British motives, not unnaturally concluded that ^{the League} it was directed entirely against herself, and loudly reproached Britain for depriving her of possible allies. 156. Italy and Austria, as they gradually ^{understood} ~~came to discover~~ that Britain was using the league not to forward but to hinder a joint mediation, were angry and disappointed. Russia was irritated at finding her hopes of a congress balked, and her position made more difficult. Even Germany was not in the least grateful, ^{for} though the practical effect of the coalition was in her favour, ^{she felt} This might not last long; Great Britain might in the end become alarmed for the balance of power, and change her course, or be lured into some understanding with France and Russia; and then 157. the League would at once be transformed into a weapon of offence against Germany.

As yet, however, the aims of the British government were not fully understood, and, on the day following Mars-la-Tour, Granville reported: "The Italian minister communicated to-day very confidentially a telegram from his government stating that they were of opinion that the time had arrived for England and Italy to interpose to preserve Europe from calamity; that they desired therefore that England should offer mediation, and were ^{ready} ~~prepared~~ to acquiesce beforehand in the ~~conditions~~ she might propose, be-

ing satisfied that she desired equally with Italy to maintain the integrity of France; and that unfettered by any engagement ^{better} Italy could promise her fullest support to such mediation. My despatch by the previous messenger will show Your Excellency that ~~Her~~ ^{HER} Majesty's government consider any offer of mediation at the present moment would be premature and worse than fruitless."

Russia, in joining the League, said that if any great power made a proposal about mediation, she would accede to it. Granville replied that the time was not yet come, and Gortschakov assented.

On August 29th Italy again suggested that the neutral powers should take some step to put an end to the war, and Granville said it would be useless: any offer made with that object would not be acceptable to either belligerent.

Immediately after Sedan Beust made a proposal similar to Italy's of August 17th, and received a similar answer.

Morier now reported to the government: "A very general impression prevails in Germany to the effect that H.M. Government have taken the initiative in the organisation of a neutral league which when the time for concluding peace comes, shall insist upon Germany not making any demands for territorial cessions on the part of France." Granville replied, not altogether frankly, that the government had "declined to entertain any proposals for a combination of the Neutral Powers with a view of localising the war, or with regard to the eventuality of combined mediation... They have interchanged notes separately with the majority of the Neutral Powers, containing mutual assurances against the departure of one Power from an attitude of neutral-

Granville to Lyons, 17.8.70. This quotation, and the reference to Beust's proposal in September, are made from the Foreign Office papers by the courtesy of Mr Cruttwell.

ity, without a previous communication to the other... You will consequently see that there is no truth whatever in the rumours to the contrary effect."⁷⁵⁾

The fall of the Empire and establishment of the Government¹⁶¹ of National Defence in France did not lead to any alteration in the policy of Britain. The first action of Jules Favre was to ask for British mediation, but this was refused, and so was the request for the official recognition of the Republic. Granville made recognition conditional on the formal approval of the new government by the nation, and Favre and his colleagues were averse to holding a general election in the midst of a desperate war and with a large part of French territory occupied by the enemy, it was impossible to obtain this.

Thiers had now set¹⁶² out upon his pilgrimage to "find Europe," and repaired first to London, but had little success there. His reception by Granville was cold: when Thiers said that France had not wished the war, and should not be blamed for the policy of the Emperor, Granville interrupted him, saying that France had wanted war, for the Napoleonic dynasty was the instrument of public opinion. So much discouraged was Thiers that he wrote to Favre: "It is believed in London that Lord Granville is influenced by the Queen's feeling for her relations, but I must say that he appears principally¹⁶³ guided by a policy of irresolution, which consists in avoiding all questions which may cause difficulties."⁷⁶⁾ Later interviews with Granville and Gladstone were only a little more encouraging. Britain, they said, wished well

⁷⁵⁾ Morier to Granville, 2 Sept. 1870. Granville to Morier, 12 Sept. 1870. Bluebook.
⁷⁶⁾ Favre, p. 96.

~~couraging~~. Britain, they said, wished well to France, but she would not fight for her, and if she insisted on a mediation with the other neutrals, "she would expose herself to the displeasure of Prussia, who would not hear of their intervention, and by that means she would damage our cause instead of serving it." Such interference would be so ~~highly~~ disagreeable to Bismarck that France would get much better terms by direct negotiations. Gladstone said that if the Prussian peace-terms involved a territorial cession, then "England would speak out her mind." But this was vague enough, and all that Thiers obtained of effectual aid was a promise that Granville would facilitate a personal interview between Jules Favre and Bismarck, and that Queen Victoria would write to the King of Prussia and advise him to negotiate. (77) 164

Granville was as good as his word in advising Bismarck to negotiate with Favre, though he told Bernstorff that he fully recognised that there could be no talk of armistice or peace, unless France would sincerely accept as basis the terms laid down by Prussia. The interview took place, and led to nothing. Bismarck demanded a guarantee that the new government was approved by the nation, and when Favre said this could only be given by convoking a national assembly, he said this was impossible: "In order to carry out this plan, an armistice would be needed, and I will not grant one at any price." Later he consented to an armistice on conditions that included the occupation of the forts on Mont Valérien---the virtual surrender of Paris. Favre was obliged to return, having gained absolutely nothing. 165.

Italy asked what Britain intended to do, since the negotiations had failed. Granville replied that there was nothing to be done, and the siege of Paris commenced. Austria then proposed, once more, a joint mediation. She could not act alone, she explained, for fear of Russia; but she would gladly join in any collective action. Granville refused. Bismarck had sent a hectoring dispatch, saying it would be "eine grausamkeit des letzteren" which would protract the war, if Britain did not immediately cut short French hopes of diplomatic or material intervention; and Granville had taken it to heart. Early in October, Beust, worn out of all patience, broke out into expostulations. He had hoped, he said, "when H.M. Government proposed the exchange of notes relative to the maintainance of neutrality, that that measure would result in a collective effort for the establishment of peace; and it was with this view that the suggestion was made by Austria that a clause should be inserted in the notes which would prevent the isolated mediation of any one Power..." The only chance of success would be found in collective action. Austria wished "to see Europe recover from the species of torpor in which she seemed to be plunged in fear of a great convulsion." It was necessary "to rouse France from her illusions, and waken Prussia from her contempt and indifference to the other powers." In his letters to his agents at Berlin, Beust described his object. "The Government of Austria-Hungary...consider it a duty to state that they still believe in European common interests, and that they would prefer peace obtained by the impartial influence of the neutrals to the destruction of further hundreds of thousands."

78) Bismarck to Bernstorff, 13 Sept. 1870. Rheindorf, p. 183.

79) Granville to Bloomfield, 10. October 1870. Bluebook.

The Neutrals should "moderate the demands of the conqueror, soften the sentiments which must crush the vanquished." Beust's proposals obtained no definite reply. 169

The excuse offered by the British Government for their repeated refusals and prolonged inaction was that it was useless to intervene as long as Favre adhered to his declaration, on first entering office, that France would never give up "a foot of her territory, or a stone of her fortresses." On October 8, however, Lyons reported that "though they declare in private as in public that they will never consent to any cession of territory," still Chaudordy had told him that a general mediation could enforce terms that neither France nor Prussia could spontaneously offer. 170 This not being explicit enough to draw any response from Granville, Chaudordy a week later, and under pledge of secrecy, definitely told Granville that France would consent to such a cession when the time came, but that no one dared to say so openly at present. The men now in office could not sign such a treaty of peace, but they would be ready to resign and to give their full support to others who were not pledged as they were. It was, however, impossible to declare this openly as yet, without ruining the government: "It must appear to rise at the critical time out of the necessities of the hour." 171

Perhaps this confidence contributed to the change that now began to appear in the Cabinet of London; perhaps this was rather due to the alteration of public opinion, or to a slow awakening to the real significance of events in France.

80) Beust to Wimpffen, 13 Oct. 1870. Beust to Chotek, 12 Oct. 1870. Beust, II, p. 207 ff.

81) Lyons to Granville, 8 Oct. 1870, 18 Oct. 1870. Lyons I, pp. 325 ff.

III.

Public opinion, at the beginning of the war, had been, as we have seen, generally upon the side of Germany. The most part of the press took the same side, though there was always a respectable minority that upheld the cause of France, and this minority gradually increased.

The terrible disasters which had overwhelmed France, and the rapidity of her fall, awed and moved the spectators. Some considered that she had expiated through suffering the faults of the past; others, with that unreasoning generosity that is one of the endearing qualities of their nation, simply went over bag and baggage to the weaker side. The friends of France were encouraged by the news of the abdication of the Emperor and the establishment of the Republic. Enthusiasm was stirred by the desperate efforts of the Government of National Defence, by the orations of Gambetta, and by the patriotic awakening of the disillusioned people of France. The shooting-down of franc-tireurs, the burning of villages, the bombardment of Strasburg, without warning, and deliberate destruction of its priceless library, shocked a generation strange to the horrors of war. A ribald parody on King William's pious letters to his wife, in which Prussian mentality was curiously exhibited, went from lip to lip. The climax came when it was understood that Germany intended to

Thanks be to God, my dear Augusta,
We've had another awful buster;
Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below.
Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Punch, 3 Sept. 1870.

demand a territorial cession from France. In what way, indignant voices began to ask, was the conduct of Germany superior to that for which France had been often reproached? 174.

To bring this growing opinion, which favoured some sort of intervention in favour of France, to bear upon the government, was no easy matter. Generally speaking, the powerful middle-class was still solid for Germany and peace. The working-class had rallied to the side of France when the republic was proclaimed, and a considerable section of these, led by a few members of the professional and literary classes, and a few rather discredited politicians, began to agitate, not only for the recognition of the republic, but sometimes even for military intervention. These demonstrations were of too democratic a nature to find 175. favour with government or press, and were persistently ridiculed, as was the somewhat over-effusive sympathy of Ireland, where the cause of France was upheld partly as a means of annoying England. A much larger body of the public was content to show its sympathy simply by generous contributions to Red Cross and relief work.

But even had opinion been stronger and better organised, there was no adequate means of expressing it. Parliament was not sitting, and the government took care that it was not summoned, putting off the evil day as long as they dared, and in fact 176. until it was too late for any change of policy. Even had Parliament been in session, the working classes were not represented there, and only a few of the Conservatives had definitely espoused the cause of France.

Outside Parliament, the greatest political power of ~~any~~

in the country had, from the first days of the campaign, carried on a consistent and virulent attack on France. No accusation was too wild or too ruffianly to be brought forward in those magisterial pages. The hatred with which Britain was at this time regarded in France was chiefly due to the Times, which, so efficient was its editor, penetrated even into beleaguered Paris. The events which had changed general opinion had had no effect upon the Times, and the paper showed the utmost dexterity in throwing cold

The government of National Defence, considering only their own interest, to govern a great nation, which is to do nothing that shall lead to national disaster. The resistance of the peasant is patriotic feeling. "The peasant is the peasant who has rolled. A 'White Terror' has been there are any feelings to the peasant in France. The peasant is not against a revolutionary, but against any man, the priest and

water upon popular admiration of the French resistance.

Doubts were cast on the resolution of the new government and of the people. "In Paris, indeed, the clamour is very loud, but it is said to rest upon a feeling pervading the citizens that ^{every} 'every man's neighbour is bound to die for his country.' It behoves those who have the destinies of France in their hands well to consider whether the defence of Paris is really practicable, and whether both themselves and their people are really so firmly determined to carry matters to 'the bitter end' as they wish us to believe." (B)

The government of National Defence were vilified, and accused of considering only their own interests. "Men taken from the pavement to govern a great nation..., their first and only instinct is to do nothing that shall associate their own dear names with national disaster.... (84) There is a race between parties as to who shall go farthest in the exhibition of patriotic devotion... in the full expectation that the hand which wields the sword may ultimately also secure the sceptre." (85)

The resistance of the peasantry, England was told, was not due to patriotic feeling. "The collapse of the Napoleonic system has let loose the peasantry whom Napoleon III has so long controlled. A 'White Terror' has become possible.... We can hardly hope there are any feelings to contend against the bigotry of the average peasant in France. The scenes of La Vendée may again be enacted...not against a revolutionary government or an invading enemy, but against suspected Protestants, or any whom, for any reason, the priests may denounce." In the rural districts

the peasants are rising against the Prussians "not so much because they are enemies of the government and the dynasty, hardly because they are foreign invaders," but because---as their Priests tell them, they are Protestants, irreconcilable enemies of the Church." 180

After this attempt to awaken the spirit of religious intolerance, we cannot wonder that it was attempted to prejudice opinion against the Government of National Defense by urging that resistance could only lead to Red Revolution. The enemies of France "will rejoice to think that the reverses which France is now undergoing are in great part due to that innate spirit of levity and unsteadiness in the French people which at the period of the first revolution caused such countless woes in Europe, and which it is the duty of all who have the power to confine, in this her fourth revolution, as far as possible to the soil of France itself..... What have the French left to fight for? They know not what. They are no longer a people, or a political unity, with a common consciousness, consistency, and purpose... For a century France has been trifling away its existence in quest of some better self. The result is a universal collapse... They fought as men without a cause, a loyalty, or a faith... We see France as she really is---a social chaos of violent antagonisms, without the means of light, unity, order, and law. ⁽⁸⁶⁾ ~~Of course it does not know, and could never be made to learn, what it has left to fight for.~~" 181

Sneering allusions were thrown out as to the way in which Paris would behave under a siege; and as a final insult, the

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Times, 2 Sept 1870
⁽⁸⁶⁾ Times, 7 Sept, 31 Oct. 1870
 (2) 17.9., 31.10.70.

(87)

French were elaborately compared with the Irish. ~~"The Germans are full of contempt for an enemy who cannot meet them in the field, who assembles in disorderly swarms, but dissolves before any force set in array against him..."~~ "The French hatred for the Germans, is, we are told, becoming a mania. This race, whose strength shames their weakness, whose virtues are not their virtues, which comes upon them like a remorseless fate, crushing all their hopes and indifferent to their despair, must be hated with a wild unreasoning hatred... Do we not see in the extravagant exaggeration of everything that promises a glimpse of favouring fortune, in the stubborn incredulity to accept the fact of defeat, in the refusal to endure the lesser of two evils, a picture only too familiar to us when we review our own history?"

Nothing so much shocked British opinion as the demand for the cession of Alsace and Lorraine, but the "Times", though momentarily startled and incredulous, soon began to find excuses. The French determination to fight to the death for the provinces was due to "folly, vanity, and pride," and "it was idle to preach to France resignation and common-sense. She has cast them far from her, and insists on being utterly ruined simply because too proud to accept herself the humiliation she intended for another." Germany may fairly demand a compensation, which must...be utterly inadequate, for the loss of human and material wealth she had suffered, and some guarantee that she shall not again be exposed to a similar unprovoked visitation of war..." If France resists "The Republic would once more perish, and perish because Frenchmen were more jealous of military glory than of the claims of

27.10.70.

(87) Times, 27 October 1870.

right and justice on the part of others..." Germany "would never have thought of demanding these long-lost jewels out of the old diadem of Germany, had it not been for the threatened invasion." (88) (II) "France must pay for her wanton attack on Germany."

The arguments of Thiers, that the success of Prussia might in the end be dangerous to Britain too, brought a solemn refutation.

"Germany may grow strong and France weak, but the strength of Germany is nothing to us, and we are content in our isolation. We view with equanimity the territorial ~~development~~ ^{of} Germany..."

~~Such appeals...prove that the national propensities which the Emperor believed impelled him to war have not been eradicated. Jealousy of Germany's military power made France make war, and now they appeal to the same feeling in Britain. Any manifestation of jealousy on the part of the ministers of France nips the growth of sympathy for the misfortunes of her people...They attribute to us an envious apprehension of the growth of our neighbours which has long since ceased to be a principle of our policy.~~ (89)

It was small wonder that in Paris they were asking how much Bismarck had paid the "Times"; and that it took long to remove the bitterness left by these attacks. (85)

It was small wonder, too, that the government were encouraged in their policy of inaction when such whole-hearted support was given to it by the only power that could effectually criticise their conduct.

About the middle of October, however, a change was beginning to take place in the minds of the two leaders, Granville and

Gladstone. The minds of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were changed. (89) "Times," 6.10.70. Oct. 7th October---3rd November.

Secretary had already begun to diverge. Both had been affected 186.
by the harshness of the peace-terms offered by Germany, by the
siege of Paris, and by Lyons' late reports of the more concil-
iatory spirit, or **growing** desperation, of France: but though
each was inclined to action of a mild sort, their ideas of what
was desirable differed.

Granville, who prided himself on his practical outlook, (and
~~he wished to avoid John Russell's old fault of scolding and~~
~~lecturing~~) was just beginning to have an idea that so complete
a destruction of French power might have its disadvantages. He
had, by now, had time to assimilate some of the new ideas that
were being forced upon him. He still thought a collective inter- 187.
vention would be a kittle matter, requiring over-delicate hand-
ling for him to attempt it, but he thought it would be worth
while to risk an attempt to come to an understanding with Russia
--since time had passed, and Russia had done nothing alarming.
On October 16th he wrote to Buchanan, asking whether it would
be possible for England and Russia to come jointly to an under-
standing between themselves as to the terms on which peace might
be made and if Prince Gortschakov's answer should be in the
affirmative...you would further ask him whether he considers
that there would be any possibility of putting a stop to the 188.
siege of Paris, if England and Russia jointly with other neutral
powers should make an appeal to the humanity of the King of
Russia on the one hand and recommend moderation to the French
government on the other." The terms suggested were the razing of
Metz and Strasburg and an indemnity. The singular ineptitude of
the second part of the proposal possibly disinclined Gortschakov

to consider the first seriously. Perhaps he had definitely given up the idea of making a bargain with Britain about the Black sea before this, ^{for} and the progress of the war was making ~~the~~ alternative course less dangerous. Though the state papers do not throw much light upon the matter, the private correspondence of Granville and Buchanan might do so. At any rate, nothing came of Granville's invitation, a result which he attributed to "lack of openness" on the part of Russia. 189

Italy, on October 21st, again urged intervention; "By bringing a little pressure to bear upon both belligerents the terms of peace could be found," she suggested, and she had information that Favre would treat if there were any possibility of obtaining reasonable terms. Granville was averse to action which should include Austria and Italy, and exclude Russia, but he was now sufficiently exercised in mind as to be ready to act alone. He took no advantage of Italy's offer, but, having prepared the way ^{(90) 187} by flattery, he appealed to Prussia, in the name of what Bismarck called "the English catchwords"---Humanity, Civilisation, and the sufferings of non-combatants---to grant an armistice. Austria heard of the proposal and supported it with enthusiasm, but the discussions ended in nothing, for Bismarck refused flatly to grant a revictualling of Paris for an equivalent period to the armistice, and the French naturally said that without this there would be no armistice for them. Annoyed by the failure, and by the continued refusal of France to announce publicly that she would consent to a territorial cession, Granville relapsed into

⁽⁹¹⁾ This information is derived from the Foreign Office papers, by the courtesy of Mr Cruttwell. ⁽⁹²⁾ Bluebook. ⁽⁹⁰⁾ "During this war two moral causes have added immensely to the great material power of the Germans. They have been fighting to repel the threat of a Russian invasion and to assert the rights of a great country" (p. 10)

inactivity.

~~The "Times", which had announced the event with great pomposity, assuring the world that England was "the one European nation capable of negotiating a durable peace, because the one nation which has no territorial ambition to gratify," was correspondingly annoyed, and viciously accused Favre of insincerity. (Those who wished some help to be given to France were disappointed that Granville seemed to be content with the repulse.)~~

Gladstone had taken late events in a different spirit. Though he had the personal dislike for the French of the English ^{while} ~~middle~~ class, where Granville had a personal liking for them, yet ^{he} ~~was~~ was in a larger mould. He could not endure the thought of standing by to watch the annexation of the French provinces in a silence that seemed to him like complicity. This violation of the principles of nationality and self-determination touched the idealist nearly. His instinct was to sermonize, and he would gladly have shown to the German government and people the error of their ways. He was cautious---he had no intention whatever of taking any action to prevent the cession---but he longed to speak out in thundering periods his detestation of the outrage--to let his England, from her proud moral elevation, denounce the greed of Prussia. He began to urge on Granville a public protest against the ^(Q1) cession, and the Foreign Secretary was hard put to it ¹⁹² to resist him. "Quite exhausted," he wrote, "after the longest fight I ever had against Gladstone." ^(Q2) He did not want to encourage France and offend Germany by public disapproval, and he was

(Ltd.) of foreign invasion and to assert the rights of a great country to constitute itself, etc." Granville to Loftus, 20.10.70 Bluebook. (Q1) He also wished to suggest a plebiscite to Prussia. (Q2) Granville Vol. 11, p 62. Oct.

obliged to ask Gladstone to restrain himself when interviewing the foreign ambassadors, and not to raise illusive hopes by expressing his opinion of the cession too freely. Gladstone himself soon realised that he might get himself into a position from which it would be difficult to withdraw, and constrained himself to write a long and meaningless letter to Lyons, in 194 which he strove to reconcile his prudence and his conscience. The French claim for inviolability of soil was quite untenable, he said, and their ~~de~~claration "not an inch of their territory, not a stone of their fortresses," was extravagant and unreasonable. On the other hand, he did not wish to convey "on my part, or by implication on the part of anyone else, the belief that we approved of, or were in our own minds indifferent to, the transfer of Alsatians and Lorrainers from France to Germany against their wills.... I should be to the last degree reluctant to be a 195 party not only to stipulating a German demand of this kind, but even to advising or promoting a compliance with it on the part of France. All this you will see is quite distinct from and consistent with the desire which you and which we all entertain that the Defence Government of France should not needlessly deal in abstract declarations... On the failure of the armistice I think the Cabinet will disperse, as having nothing more to consider in the present circumstances. I cannot help feeling doubtful as to whether the Prussians do not lose more than the French 196 by the unhappy failure of the negotiations."

Granville, meantime, hoped that in the end Prussia would only ask for the fortresses, and not for the whole of Alsace and

Lorraine. "The time may come," he said, "When we may use this bit of buncombe (the public protect^s) with effect, and possibly help Bismarck by doing so." He imagined that Bismarck was against the annexation, and that the demand was being pressed by the military chiefs. This idea was founded on Bismarck's conduct in 1866 when with all his strength he had fought to prevent King William and the ^vgenerals from stripping Austria of her German provinces. 197. But Granville misunderstood the situation. In 1866 Bismarck had wished to save Austria from destruction, because he already saw in her a future ally; he treated her generously because he wanted to have a strong and friendly power for his neighbour on the south, and so he would not let her be either irretrievably ruined or unendurably humiliated. In 1870 Bismarck had no wish to spare France or to avoid raising in her a **thirst** for revenge. **He** simply wished to reduce her to such a condition that she would never again be a dangerous neighbour to Germany. The **"recovery"** 198. of Alsace and Lorraine had been with him, as with every patriotic German, ^{his} the dearest ambition, and he had intended, from the commencement of the war, to secure it. Military reasons, as well as sentimental, played a part in his decision, and economic *motives* (which seem to have been ignored by Granville) played perhaps the most important part of all.

The siege of Paris dragged on, and everywhere feelings were embittered and tempers sharpened in consequence. In Paris itself those "Red" **elements** which thrive on despair, darkness, and suffering waxed stronger and more confident: while the Paris government squabbled with their colleagues at Tours, and Gambetta felt the timidity of his companions a drag on his fiery spirit, and a hindrance to his plans. In the enemy's camp, **things** were little 199.

better; Bismarck, worked into one of his nervous fevers by suspense and anxiety, was involved in a violent quarrel with Moltke and the generals. It was ~~on~~ the utmost importance to him that Paris should fall, before any outside intervention could snatch the prize from his hands. "The possibility of a European intervention was a cause^v of disquietude and impatience to ^m be in view^{200.} of the slow progress of the siege... If...the hostile elements and the jealous dishonest friends, who were not wanting to us in any of the courts, had succeeded in bringing about an understanding between the other powers, or even between any two of them, to address to us a warning or a question, ostensibly suggested by philanthropic feelings, no one could know how quickly a first movement of this kind might develope to a collective and in the first instance diplomatic attitude of the Neutrals...An intervention, which could only tend to deprive us Germans of⁽¹⁾ the prize of victory, by means of a Congress." Moltke, for⁽⁹⁴⁾⁽¹⁾ military reasons, was not ready to bombard, and held on his way undisturbed by the Chancellor's storms, and by the exhortations which⁽⁹⁵⁾⁽²⁾ reached him from all quarters of Germany. ^{201.}

The English attempt at mediation had but one result: Russia feared that it might be the beginning of a more decided policy, and considered that ~~she~~ must act now or never. On the 31st of October she issued a circular denouncing the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris.

(11) (94)
Reminiscences, II, 3.
Bismarck. — p. III

(12) (95)
guter Moltke, gehst so stumm
Immer um das Ding herum,
Bester Moltke sei nicht dumm,
Mach doch endlich Bum, Bum, Bum!

IV

A great political genius impresses something of his own character on the age in which he lives; and the influence of Bismarck's career was already noticeable in the change which had stolen ~~slowly and~~ gradually over international affairs---the growing spirit of lawlessness, the less care taken to hide naked greed with a mask of morality, the more open tribute paid to brute force. This change was for the first time clearly expressed in the Black Sea Circular put forth by Gortschakov. 202.

"Le Traité du 18---30 Mars 1856 n'a d'ailleurs pas échappé aux dérogations dont la plupart des transactions européennes ont été frappé, et en présence desquelles il serait difficile d'affirmer que le droit écrit, fondé sur le respect des traités, comme base du droit **public** et règle des rapports entre les États, ait conservé la même sanction morale qu'il a pu avoir en d'autres temps." 203.

The danger which threatened Europe by the denouncement of the Black Sea engagements lay in this, not in any material loss or gain to any power concerned. The treaty, as far as these clauses were concerned, was absurd; it was a treaty that should never have been signed, resulting from a war that should never have been fought. Europe would gain, not lose, by the abrogation of the unnatural and artificial restrictions it had imposed on Russia. But the circumstances in which Russia had obtained her deliverance were ominous. The deliberate flouting of law, the unscrupulous repudiation of solemn engagements, and the open and contemptuous admission that one of the great powers of Europe acknowledged material force as the only restraint and rule of 204.

her actions, ----all this warned observers whither the new Machiavellism initiated at Berlin was carrying the world. Putting all question of law and morality aside, the political situation was equally dangerous for great Britain. She found herself isolated: only from Austria, the weakest of the great powers, could ²⁰⁵ she ^{expect} ~~count on~~ support against Russia.

For a long time Britain had been satisfied to rely on a single friend, and that friend attached to her by the slenderest ties. She had stood by to see this solitary ally destroyed, and she now discovered that, without the support of France, her influence in Europe had vanished. She was powerless. Her protests were disregarded, her friendship or her enmity valued by none, because no one believed she would strike in her own defence. Her statesmen had frequently proclaimed that the alliance of the Western Powers upheld the peace of Europe, meaning by this that ²⁰⁶ Britain was able to restrain the aggressive and ambitious spirit of France: but they now found ^{that} their statement was true in another sense, and that only ^{the} good understanding of the Western Powers could prevent any action, however illegal, undertaken by the Powers of the North. Their policy of peace, quiet, non-intervention had led them to a situation where there was no remedy but the sword. Unless they were prepared to fight, they must stand by to watch an outrage on the public law of Europe, and ^{(17) (96)} a treaty, which they valued highly, impudently thrown aside. ²⁰⁷ The policy they had so long pursued, of confining their attention to internal affairs and personal interests, or neglecting their

⁽¹⁸⁾ They afterwards asserted that they attached no value to the treaty; but their policy had been for some time directed chiefly to preserve it. Moreover the Crimean war had been prolonged for another year to obtain the Black Sea clauses only, all the other terms having been secured in 1855.

military resources and relying on their strong natural frontier, the sea, for defence---this policy had only been possible when they had a strong ally in Europe. ~~(They had often said that only French bayonets upheld the dynasty of Bonaparte; they had not realised how far those French bayonets upheld also British prestige on the Continent. Now France was no longer a factor in the political balance in Europe, they must either rely on their own strength, or abdicate the position which Britain held as a great power. That strength was great: perhaps no power in Europe had such vast resources, moral and material, on which to draw. But the Liberal government hardly realised this. Even had their wishes not been so pacific, they would not have dared to fight, for they feared another débâcle such as they had known in the Crimea.)~~

They found now of how little value was their assumption of a superior political morality. The great strength of the gospel of force is that it cannot be countered by a morality that is in any degree false and unreal; and the weakness of British political morality²⁰⁶ was that it did not rest on facts; it was unconsciously insincere. Devoted as often were the men who upheld it, yet there was always a certain amount of truth in the accusation of foreigners, when they said that Britain wanted peace for the security of her manufactures and trade. Consciousness of military weakness, fear of offending the mercantile classes, and anxiety to conciliate those classes by economy, all played their part, as well as sincere abhorrence of the brutality of war, in forming that deep love of peace that existed in the government. ~~Some of the men who made up that government were conscious hypo-~~

critics; practiced self-deceivers, they never stopped to analyse their own motives. Nevertheless these influences^{ences} had helped to decide the government to abandon Denmark in 1864, when they found they must fight without an ally. This was known abroad, and foreign states (unjustly enough) never again credited or respected Britain's moral protests. The government felt this now. Britain was not the martyr of her conscience, but of her weakness. He 209 that turns the other cheek to a blow, not through self-control but because he is unable to resist, need expect no admiration. Now, if the country did not acknowledge to herself that her moral position was unsound, and that she could only regain the right to preach a peace policy by showing that she had strength and resolution enough for a military one, ^{when} if her cause were just, she would soon be an object of contempt in Europe.

Britain

In the East, she had to face the alliance of what were now the only two European powers as strong as herself---Russia and Germany. For a time there was a danger that a third enemy, and one that could injure her in a more vulnerable spot, would join itself to these two. Bismarck had already threatened Loftus with a German-American alliance, when annoyed with Britain for exporting arms to France. There had been a long and bitter quarrel 210 between Britain and the United States since 1862, when the carelessness and indecision of Russell and Palmerston had allowed the Confederate Frigate Alabama to escape from an English port. The States claimed a huge compensation, and the agreement arrived at by Clarendon with their agents had been repudiated by the Senate, so that the difficulty was still dragging on. Soon after the Franco-German war began, Bismarck thought to take advantage of this, but the ascendancy of the Monroe Doctrine in

action the British government intended to take against Russia, and Thiers^v had rushed to Lyons to propose an anti-Russian alli- 214
 ance of Britain, Austria, Italy, France, Turkey, and Spain---the last-named state, having made a few mild efforts in favour of collective mediation, might be ready to go further. British opinion was greatly excited, and the press ~~was~~ talking of such a combination as this. Buchanan had not waited for instructions before telling Gortschakov that he expected orders to ask for his passports at once, and the British ambassador at Constantinople was equally martial in tone. The "Times", ~~which~~ a few weeks before, had proclaimed that if Russia had ever contemplated such a movement, "she must now perceive that the opportunity is lost, for it is now. ~~too late to save France... and too late to rely on the~~ 215
 connivance of Prussia in an attack on Turkey... It is a grave error..to believe that any German power can ever be indifferent to the fate of Turkey." But the ~~Thunderer~~ now remarked that ~~they~~ had expected the circular for some time, though ~~they~~ ~~was~~ "grievously disappointed" in Alexander II, and that "it is impossible to admit for a moment the power claimed by the Tsar to free himself from the obligations of the treaty of Paris." "Russia has placed herself in the position of a public enemy," it added, 216.
 but "even if France were ten times more utterly annihilated (sic) than Russia, perhaps, imagines her to be, there would still remain sufficient strength in Europe to curb Russian ambition, no matter on what ground the contest might have to be carried on, besides the banks of the Danube or the waters of the Euxine." (97)

So great and so general was the excitement that the government considered it wise to postpone the meeting of parliament, which

Times, Oct. 1. 10., 16. 11., 18. 11. 20. 1870

had already been delayed, lest attacks should be made on the policy of "laissez faire." Bernstorff reported²¹⁷ that it was expected that "the Lower House will if necessary vote like one man against Gladstone for war with Russia. The Ministry takes the matter very seriously, but will make no war if they can avoid it." Later he wrote, "He (Granville) holds it desirable that, in the interests of peace, the conference should be concluded before the meeting of Parliament." (98) (11)

For the government did not for a moment contemplate strong action against Russia. Gladstone was so anxious to avoid being drawn into a quarrel that he even opposed the sending of a special envoy, Odo Russell, to negotiate²¹⁸ with Bismarck at the German Headquarters. **Bright** wrote from a sick-bed to plead for peace. "No war, I hope and believe. Any interference^e on our part would fail, and General Grant would come down on you for payment of the Alabama claims and an apology. Then the blackness of darkness. War would destroy your government and ruin your own reputation. The ruffians of the "Times" will support you only to betray... I do not complain of Lord Granville's despatch---but you should negotiate and yield---first because it is just and second because you cannot avoid it... Be strong for peace---and ²¹⁹ show a good front against the 'Services' and all who would urge you to military preparations. Every man added to the forces and every ship put in commission strengthens your opponents and weakens your own power." (99) (12)

Popular excitement had obliged Granville to write a strong

Nov. Bernstorff to Bismarck, 13. ~~Nov.~~ 70. The Same 2. ~~Dec.~~ 70. Rheindorf. pp. 1856
(12) Bright II, p. 417-8.

despatch, in which, according to the "Times," he "conveys a most cutting reproof to the Russian minister...and puts him completely in the wrong...Our Government is so scandalised by this new mode of Russian aggression that it refused altogether to enter into the merits of the question except to say that it is impossible for ~~His Majesty's~~ Government to give any sanction to the course announced by prince Gortschakov." (100) This despatch, however, and Granville's declaration that the Treaty of Paris must stand or fall as a whole, were nothing more than bluff. The best the Government hoped for was a Conference, and even that was not so easy to obtain. ~~In the meantime Granville, though outwardly taking up this determined attitude, hastened to discourage any expectations on the part of foreign powers.~~

New disasters had ^{meanwhile} fallen on France. Metz had surrendered, as a result of imperialist intrigues set on foot by Bismarck, and so Gambetta's new levies had to be flung into the field after three weeks' training. A balloon, containing the plans of the new campaign, came down in the German camp. A sudden rising of the Marne interfered with the necessary military movements. But Paris still held out, though Moltke had boasted that he would be shooting hares over his own ground before the end of October. Both Austria and France suggested that the presence of Odo Russell at Versailles might be used to force Bismarck to consent to an armistice; but Granville refused, and told Lyons to "explain to them (the French ministers) that it (the Russian circular) is, at the very least, a more serious subject for them than for us." (101) This was an emphatic statement, for Favre and Thiers would have been ready to buy Russian help by offering the keys

Only the daring of their envoy at Versailles saved the government from a complete humiliation. Russia was at first inclined to refuse a conference, and Bismarck would give no support to Britain. "They wish most strongly here for an understanding with Prussia," Bernstorff reported, and the envoy had special instructions to take the greatest care not to annoy Bismarck, and to avoid all reference to the questions of peace or armistice with France, unless the Chancellor himself introduced the subject. Bismarck's first reception of the overtures was cold and discouraging, and Granville was much disappointed; but by good luck the Chancellor took a liking to Odo Russell, and the envoy, on his own responsibility, boldly told him that Britain would go to war, with or without allies, if Russia did not consent to a conference in London. Bismarck dared not take the risk. He was annoyed with Russia, who had made her declaration at an inconvenient moment. He promised to put pressure on Russia to accept, and became very friendly with Russell, talking of Germany as the "natural ally" of Britain, and saying that Germany could not neglect the chance of such an alliance "even at the cost of sacrificing existing friendships."

The conference, it was arranged, should meet in London in January, and Prussia, admitted to the conference of 1856 only on sufferance, now issued the invitations, and signalled her entrance into Balkan politics by arranging the Eastern Question.

"I am afraid," wrote Granville, "Our whole success has been

102) Bernstorff to Bismarck, 18 Nov. 1870. Rheindorf, p. 112.

103) The same, 23 Nov. 1870. Rheindorf, p. 186.

104) Odo Russell to Granville, 18 Dec. 1870. Granville, II, p. 74.

owing to the belief that we would go to war, and to tell the truth I think that war in some shape or other, sooner or later, was a possible risk after our note." (105) (11)

While the preparations for the Black Sea Conference went on, the patriotic enthusiasm ~~in~~ Germany, which had already been shown in devoted and heroic service, culminated in a final demand for national unity which swept away all possible opposition on the part of individual governments. Bismarck's long-sustained efforts were crowned with complete success. A deputation from all the German states offered the Imperial crown to the King of Prussia, and on December 18th he was proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles. 225

Granville at last attempted to do something for France by insisting that French plenipotentiaries should be invited to the Conference. He would, he said, permit no discussion of the position of France while the sittings lasted; but when the negotiations were concluded, there was nothing to prevent the French plenipotentiaries from introducing the subject if they pleased--and if anyone remained to listen to them. This rather vague promise was received with little enthusiasm in France, but it caused considerable anxiety to Bismarck. "Even at Versailles," he wrote later, "I feared that the participation of France in the London Conference...might be used in order, with the assurance that Talleyrand had shown at Vienna, to graft the Franco-German question onto the programme for discussion. For that reason, notwithstanding recommendations from many quarters, I prevented, by 226

(118) Granville to Gladstone, 8. Dec. 1870. Morley's Gladstone II, p. 355. 227.

influences at home and abroad, the participation of Favre in the Conference. ⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ ~~For this reason,~~ ^{therefore} he caused it to be understood at Bordeaux, through Russian channels, that he would permit no discussion of the peace terms, even if France went to the Conference. Granville's letter, announcing to Favre that Prussia had at last consented to grant a safe-conduct, written on December 29th, was delayed in the German camp till January 16th, and when, after waiting three days, Favre wrote to Bismarck to ask for the safe-conducts, Bismarck replied that Favre should have applied to the military authorities, and that as he had not done so the safe-conducts could not be granted, for if Bismarck himself sent them it would imply an official recognition of the Government of National Defence. Finally he told Favre that in the negotiations for the surrender of Paris which were inevitably approaching, he required his personal presence, and Favre, who had already postponed his departure on a romantic scruple when the bombardment began, was constrained to accept this virtual command. ⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ ~~(2)~~ It was not until the last sitting of the Conference that a French plenipotentiary at last appeared in time to append his signature. 228.

The French government have been frequently blamed for failing to seize the **chance** offered ~~them~~, and others besides Bismarck have drawn comparisons with 1815. This is hardly just. France had no Talleyrand in 1870, and, what was more important, Britain had no Wellington ^{or Castlereagh.} Neither the solemn and priggish old man who led the ministry, nor the **prudent**, selfish, and unimaginative Gladstone who was foreign secretary, could have played the part

of the plenipotentiary ^{ies} to the Vienna Congress, ~~who combined the moderation and foresight of a great statesman with the courage and generosity of a soldier.~~

Moreover, Great Britain was not in the same position in 1870ⁿ as in 1815, and even with the best of goodwill her government ^{230.} could not have exercised the same influence, without changing their foreign policy. Then she had been the strongest power in Europe, flushed with triumph after a great war, and now she was trying to cover with fair words a humiliating diplomatic defeat. Then she could count on the support of a great power, Austria, against a power hardly then of the first rank, Prussia. Now she had the friendship of two weak powers, ~~Italy and defeated Austria,~~ ^{Prussia and} against the greatest military power in Europe, fresh from three successful wars, and supported by Russia. ^{231.} It is doubtful, in these conditions, whether Talleyrand himself could have produced the understanding between the powers that was the necessary condition ~~to~~ the success of a peaceful intervention. In London feeling against Russia was too strong for these powers to work together, and when backed only by the weaker states the British government would not have ventured to take up a determined position against Germany. France could have done nothing with Italy and Austria alone. Moreover, the peace terms were not to be included in the deliberations of the conference; they were only to be introduced, by a lucky chance as it were, when the sittings ^{232.} were concluded. Prussia could easily have avoided a reply by saying that her representative had no full powers to deal with an exterior question, and could then have withdrawn. There was, in addition to all this, a strong feeling in France that the country should not either allow herself to be represented as a

free agent, or ~~to~~ commit herself to the approval of terms which she was in any case powerless to modify.

No doubt it would have been wiser to catch at every straw, and to send some other representative when Favre's departure ²³³ was prevented; but it is not probable that any real success could have been attained, beyond the official recognition of the Government of National Defence. The time for outside intervention had passed with the old year.

Russia could afford to make concessions. She had obtained all she wished for at the cost of the paper and ink with which her circular was written, and no doubt, ~~(like the fisherman with the flounder,~~) only regretted that she had not asked for more.

Under Bismarck's persuasion, Gortchakov consented to write a second note, in which he said that he could not allow that "the abrogation of a theoretical principle without immediate applic- ²³⁴ ation, and which only restores to Russia a right of which no great Power ought to be deprived, can be considered as a menace for peace, or that annulling one point of the Treaty of 1856 implies the annulment of all." Britain declared herself satisfied with this. The "Times" had changed its tune, scenting danger, ~~before this,~~ and declared that the honour of England was satisfied, while praising Granville's statesmanlike handling of the affair. Granville stipulated that the decision of the Conference should not be considered a foregone conclusion; but this ^{could} did not prevent Europe from thinking it so, as it was indeed, (the fact) ²³⁵ After protracted discussions, the Conference finally adopted a protocol which said that: "It is an essential principle of the law of Nations that no power can liberate itself from ^{the engagements of} a Treaty nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of

the Contracting Powers by means of an amicable arrangement." The Conference then abrogated the clauses, 14 and 19, of the Treaty of Paris which had been repudiated by Russia, and made a new arrangement which authorised Turkey to ~~forbid~~ the entrance of ships of war into the ~~pardanelles~~. The British government ²³⁶ proclaimed that everything had been satisfactorily arranged.

Nevertheless they had done no more than draw a decent veil over a humiliating defeat. The ~~episode~~ of the Conference only showed that any power, which was in a strong enough position to repudiate its treaty obligations, might count on having that repudiation ratified by Europe, if ready to make a few concessions as to the phraseology used. Such success as Great Britain had obtained was due in great part to the unauthorised threats of her agent at Versailles that she meant to go to war---that is, simply to the momentary belief that she was ready to meet force ²³⁷ with force. The fact that the engagements in question were much better abolished did not alter the fact that Britain had been mocked at and defied. These ~~engagements~~ had been regarded by her ministers as reasonable, desirable, and necessary, and they had just refused an offer to alter them by "amicable arrangement" in return for Russia's support abroad. (Any other state, in the ~~same position as Russia, might ~~repudiate~~ other treaty obligations of much greater value.~~)

While the ministry were eagerly proclaiming "Doch die Katze, die Katz' ist gerettet," and pluming themselves on their moderation and good management, the peace preliminaries, and the final peace terms, were concluded in France. Bismarck made only ²³⁸ two concessions to the efforts of Thiers to soften his heart.

The indemnity, originally fixed at six milliards of francs, was reduced to five milliards; and he had given the French negotiators the choice between the cession of Belfort, and a German entry into Paris. Thiers and his fellows immediately resolved to keep Belfort; the Emperor William, when asked for his preference, chose the triumphal entry. ~~an interesting comment on the British superstition about the "vanity and levity" of France.~~ After the signature of the peace preliminaries, the Commune and its attendant horrors, besides again alienating public opinion in Great Britain, also gave Bismarck excuse to break some of the pledges he had made at Versailles and make the definitive terms more stringent. By the Peace of Frankfurt, Alsace and about two-fifths of Lorraine, including Metz, were ceded to Germany; one milliard indemnity was to be paid by France before the end of 1871, the remaining four within three years. ~~After payment of the first milliard and a half, the departments of Somme, Seine-Inférieure, and Eure, would be evacuated by the German armies; the departments of Oise, Seine-et-Oise, Seine-et-Marne, and Seine, with the Paris fortifications on the right bank of the river, were to be held until Germany was satisfied that order was restored in France; as each instalment was paid, a part of the occupied area would be evacuated, but the territory between the Moselle and the Marne would be occupied until the indemnity was completely paid off. The army of occupation was to be supported by France, and had the right to levy supplies of all kinds if not punctually provided. Various works of art were confiscated with which to adorn Berlin. Then Bismarck, like King Antiochus, "when he had taken all away, went into his own land, having made a great massacre, and spoken very proudly."~~

(108) Granville flattered himself that this was due to his remonstrances, but in reality the reduction was made by Bismarck on

N.P.
 Almost gains
 Franco-German War
 All the profits from the ~~Peace of Frankfurt~~ went to the two Northern Powers. Prussia was now the ~~ruling~~ power in a new German Empire, which was beyond question the strongest state in Europe. Bismarck had obtained a complete military and diplomatic success, had established German unity, and added two new provinces to the Empire. The great rival had been ~~ruined~~, it seemed, beyond recovery, and Germany was in a position so secure as to fear ~~no~~ attack from ~~any~~ single power. 241.

Russia had also gained much, in recovering her sovereign rights in the Black Sea, and the political status which she had lost by the Crimean War. She was already doubtful, however, whether in the pursuit of her own advantage she had not allowed things to be pushed too far against France; whether the ascendancy of Germany was not too complete; and whether the entrance of that power into Eastern politics was altogether to be desired.

France ~~had~~ ^{was} apparently ~~been~~ permanently reduced to the rank of a second-rate power, and for the present, at least, she was a negligible quantity in international politics. 242.

Austria also had lost much. The success of Prussia had been so great that all hope of revenge ~~on her~~ ^{part} must be abandoned, and Austria had seen her only ally destroyed. The Eastern Question had been settled in favour of Russia, without Austria being able to obtain any compensating advantage for herself.

[Italy had profited by the crisis to complete her unification, save for the districts still held by Austria, and had made Rome

(ctd.) February 23rd, while Broglie only arrived in London with the request of the French government that Granville would protest on the night of the 24th, and when the remonstrance arrived it only annoyed and exasperated Bismarck.

her ~~capital~~; but she found herself in an uncertain and isolated position. She could no longer rely on the friendship of France, and the only alternative was an understanding with ^{Germany} ~~Prussia~~, if ~~Prussia~~, or rather Germany, ^{sh} would think it worth while to enter ^{into} ~~upon~~ one. Austria also saw the necessity of such a step, and ~~her~~ ^{as} ~~opinion~~ was soon shown by the dismissal of Beust, and his replacement by Andrassy, who was in favour of friendship with Germany. If, however, Italy should enter into an alliance with Germany, and Austria did the same, then Italy must give up all hope of **obtaining Trent and Trieste**.

After France, Great Britain was the power that had lost most. The prestige that she had partly regained by her conduct in 1867 was now thrown away through her own indecision and weakness, and failure to play the part in international affairs to which her strength and resources justly entitled her. Had she ~~definitely~~ ^{chosen} ~~definitely~~ to support either Germany or France, she might at least have gained the respect of her neighbours by a display of resolution and strength. Had she decided to hold the balance equally between them, and by intervention to prevent any really serious alteration of the relative strength of the two powers, and any ^s ~~above~~ of success by either of them, she would have played an honourable part, and would have obtained the gratitude and the support of the ~~most~~ part of the neutral powers. She would have shown herself in her old position, defender of the balance of power in Europe. As it was, she was universally believed to have been guided only by selfish ~~motives~~, while at the same time not daring to make any bold stroke to secure her own interests; and she had tried to conceal her selfish ^{ness} and her timidity by glib

talk about humanity and civilisation and peace, while all the time her trade and industry were profiting by the war. This view was ~~not~~ ²⁴⁶ a just one, but her attitude had lent itself to this conclusion, and it was no marvel that she was thus regarded. ~~(Her influence in the councils of Europe had declined almost as greatly as that of France.)~~

The interests of Europe in general had suffered by the increased spirit of lawlessness, exemplified by Russia's repudiation of the Treaty of Paris, and Prussia's of the Luxembourg Guarantee, ~~which was noticeable~~. The brutal character of the war had also ~~an~~ unpleasant effect, and though some attempt was made to repair this by the peace congresses later, which condemned several of the methods employed by the German command during the war, ⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ their efforts were handicapped by the refusal of Great Britain (apparently out of pique with Russia, the convener) to attend the Congresses. In addition to this, the cause of peace ⁽¹¹⁰⁾ ~~had been~~ damaged by the almost exclusive ascendancy in Europe of a state whose policy was based on material force. Bismarck intended to mend his ways; now that his work was done, and Germany united and secure, he meant to be as law-abiding and pacific as anyone could desire. But the critical years of the founding of the Empire had left an indelible mark on the character of its people. It was inevitable in the circumstances that a disposition should exist to rate material power above moral law. Moreover, he that calls in the sword to decide must always live in fear that others may appeal to that decision. "Coalitions are your nightmare," said Schouvalov to Bismarck later. Coalitions---of ²⁴⁸

(109) Such as shooting of franc-tireurs, taking of hostages, etc.
(110) ~~Memories~~ Vol. III, Chap. 24, etc.
Bismarck,

states injured by or threatened by Germany---continued to be the nightmare of every German statesman. The tranquillity, which depended chiefly on the overwhelming strength of one power, and the weakness and disunion of the others, was unreal and illusory. The system of international law, frail as it was, built up slowly and gradually through several centuries, had been shaken to its foundations in the last ten years, and nothing had taken its place, save doctrines of self-interest. Europe was in the position of a country where through some financial cataclysm credit has failed, and the tokens, which have hitherto regulated the market and bound together the community, no longer pass current: where every man clings to what he has, and none dare trust another. 249.

In the midst of this time of danger and doubt, it is interesting to note Granville's final comment on the result of the war, and the emotions which the communication of the peace terms roused in his mind. 250

"Vae Victis indeed! How hard the conquerors have been, and what a mistake in a great country like Germany to give up all direction of its affairs to one bold unscrupulous man! We do not believe in France being able to bear the burden that has been put upon her.

"I presume one of the results will be to put protectionist duties on all imported articles." 92

Chapter VI. Europe Without France, 1871-78.

I.

"Europe has lost a mistress and gained a master," said a British diplomat. The bon mot had truth in it: when the supremacy of France in Europe was replaced by that of Germany, an essential change took place.

First and foremost, the ascendancy of France, save in the days of the first Napoleon, had never been so complete as that of Germany was now. In 1871 there was no single power that could meet Germany on equal terms in war, nor were there many which equalled her in potential wealth and intellectual development. France had never been in a position relatively so strong. She had always been surrounded by great powers, nearly, if not quite, her equals. Even when Napoleon's power was at its zenith, France was opposed by Britain, with her great resources mobilised and ready for action. Napoleon's success had largely been made possible by the weakness and pusillanimity of Prussia, and by having Russia for a time his accomplice. In normal conditions when the unmanageable genius of a Napoleon had not to be reckoned with---neither Austria nor Russia was so easily vulnerable by France as by Germany. If Germany chose again, as she had done before, to appeal to the decision of war, there was no power that dared face her alone.

In the second place, the ascendancy of France had never been based so completely upon material force as was that of Germany, not even in the days of Napoleon. France had always represented an ideal, and had always owed something of her

strength to the influence, sometimes romantic, sometimes intellectual, which she exercised over the minds of men.

"France, famed in all great arts, in none supreme," had, by this very quality, always exercised a charm over the imagination. The many-sided development of the national life---nowhere stunted, nowhere ~~overgrown~~---had produced a civilisation that gave a remarkable impression of gracefulness, symmetry, completeness---qualities that seemed associated, on the one hand with her natural formation, the gracious intermingling of every various kind of scenery---and on the other with the finesse, the precision, the elegance of her language. Nowhere in Europe, perhaps, were there minds so ready to perceive new possibilities, and so eager to carry them from the realms of speculation into those of action. ~~It was not so much that~~ France originated new ideas as that she was the first to grasp their significance and carry them out. From France had come the spiritual impulse, as from Britain the material, which, in a double revolution, had transformed ~~the old world into the new~~. France had made the ideas of liberty, or equality, ~~and of nationality~~ part of the intellectual currency of Europe: and there was no European state whose character and history had not been essentially modified by the doctrines proclaimed by the French Revolution. It was only since France had loosed the ~~Revolution~~ that the old absolute monarchies had found they could not afford to continue longer in stagnation. France had given many of her neighbours a new code of law and an impetus to reform, and had helped to create new states that were now making their own contribution to the

welfare of the community. The power of France rested on this spiritual influence as much as on her military and material strength. This made Poland and Roumanian turn to her for sympathy, and sent Italian, Swiss, and Irish volunteers to fight under her banners.

The power of Germany rested on Sadowa and Sedan. Germany had produced great thoughts and great art, but her intellectual development had nothing to do with her European position. In the critical years of Germany's recent history, her great thinkers and artists for the most part dissociated themselves with her political and national revival. Körner wrote battle songs, but Goethe stood apart. The work of Goethe and Schiller, Kant and Hegel, swayed the minds of men; but it had not availed one jot to seduce the heart of Alsace back to her old Fatherland, or to bring a single foreign volunteer to the German army. The unification of Germany and her subsequent success were not due to the influence of poet and philosopher, who for years had preached and prophecied in vain: they were due to Bismarck's statecraft, and to "blood and iron."

The danger of the exclusive domination of one great military power was increased by the disorder and disintegration of the rest of the continent. The remaining states were all at cross-purposes, each trying to stand alone, and for the most part regarding its neighbours with suspicion or hostility. Not one of them, however, was so completely isolated as Great Britain. France had been the only state with really strong motives for an alliance with Britain, but France was no longer a possible ally.

Not only was she too weak to be much use, but Bismarck could dictate her foreign policy as long as the German army of occupation remained. Even after this, he made it one of the chief objects of his statecraft to sow distrust Between France and Britain, and prevent any understanding between them.¹⁾

Political opinion in Britain was so inimical to Russia that it was vain to hope for a reconciliation until circumstances should have completely changed---until British statesmen ceased to regard the large space occupied by Russia on the map of the world as outweighing all advantages of wealth, organisation, and climate possessed by other states; and ceased to have periodic nightmares in which they saw the Preobrajenski Guards pouring through the passes to Jellalabad, and Alexander, like Vyezhi Oleg, "fasten his shield to the gates of Tsargrad."

Italy had always a friendly regard for Britain, but her gratitude was counterbalanced by the fact that she felt she could not place any reliance on the efficacy of British support, so that her weakness forced her to search for a more dependable ally. The same was the case with Austria. A short while before both these states would have willingly entered into an understanding with Britain, but since the Franco-German War they regarded it as unsafe to count upon that power.

The dangers to which this isolation laid Britain open had been demonstrated by the Black Sea affair. It was obvious that if any of the great powers should make a similar attempt, Britain must either throw away her principles and prepare for war,

¹⁾ See Busch, II, p. 235.

or definitely abdicate her position as a first-rate power.

The British government, however, in spite of some impressive declarations, did not make any attempt to revise their policy in the years following the war. They apparently regarded the chief difficulties as past, as soon as peace was declared, and were ready to immerse themselves once more in internal affairs.

An opportunity soon offered of showing their pacific and disinterested views. The United States had finally consented to an arbitration over the Alabama claims. The Board of Arbitration

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consisted of representatives of Great Britain, the United States, Switzerland, Italy, and Brazil, and it demonstrated the hostility to Britain which existed on the Continent, for the Swiss and the Italian displayed strong animosity towards her cause. The Brazilian's friendly disposition somewhat improved matters, but even then the compensation awarded was so large that the British delegate, Lord Cockburn, said that he would have resigned, had he been the government, rather than sign the treaty. The conciliatory attitude of Britain was quite wasted on its audience; the United States exulted over a triumph, and the ^{Continental} European powers merely looked on the matter as one more example of British cowardice. When dealing with a ^{Strong and resolute adversary} state not weaker than herself.

Bismarck had to a large extent alienated the sympathies of the Liberals during the war, and they were at first divided between dislike and distrust, and a desire to keep on friendly terms with him. Odo Russell, who had been sent as ambassador to Berlin, was deeply impressed by the strength of Germany's ~~military and political position~~ ^{position}. Bismarck, he wrote, had two objects "(1) the supremacy of Germany in Europe, and of the German race in the world. (2) The neutralisation of the influence and power of the Latin race in France and elsewhere. To obtain these objects he will go any length while he lives, so that we must be prepared for surprises in the future." English policy, he continued, should aim at a "reestablishment of the Balance of Power in Europe on a general peace footing.... Germany is in reality a

£3,229,166. It would have been very much larger but for the Brazilian delegate.

to Lyons, 14.3.73. Lyons Vol. II. p. 41.

March

a great camp ready to break up for any war at a week's notice with a million of men....I believe myself that the alliance and understanding between Russia and Germany, Gortschakov and Bismarck is real, intimate and sincere; and that they have agreed to preserve Austria as long as she obeys and serves them." ~~Edo.~~ Russell probably meant the term "German race" to include his ~~own~~ countrymen. ^{Russell's} His despatches were such as to convince his government that it would not be wise to offend Germany, and events soon occurred which lessened their suspicions and revived their fainting sympathies.

Bismarck became involved in the "Kulturkampf," the struggle with the Papacy over the relations between the state and the church and the control of education, and a section of opinion in England became enthusiastic over him as the champion of Protestantism.

"A Protestant state in the midst of the continent is eminently healthy in these days of Ultramontane aggression..." said the Times, and added that Bismarck lived in fear that "The powers of darkness, represented by the Ultramontane priesthood, will be leagued with a powerful and vindictive enemy" (France) "against him."....Being a Protestant state she (Germany) "has on her side the chief social and political influences of the age."

Moreover, ~~(owing to these fears which the Times described)~~ Bismarck began to wish to secure the support of Britain, at least her moral support, against these various "powers of darkness."

Times, 10.5.75., 12.5.75., 17.5.75.
10 May, 12 May, 17 May 1875.

The rapidity with which France was repairing her losses (~~soon~~) startled him, and in ~~Spring~~, 1873, he spoke confidentially to Odo Russell, with whom he was on very friendly terms, of a possible alliance with Britain "against the common enemy." He said the Anglo-French understanding had been an "unnatural" one between two instinctively "inimical races." He even---a pretty touch this; he knew his Gladstone---complained of "His Imperial master for ²resisting the introduction of a system of administration under a responsible Premier as in England, which he, Prince Bismarck, considered the best method of developing the education of the Germans and teaching them the art of self-government." ^{5.)} ~~6~~

Germany had no motives for cultivating the friendship of France, who had nothing to offer Germany; while Britain could offer Germany Heligoland, and a reduction of the spirit duties, and had every interest in preventing France from attacking Germany, who only wanted peace. ~~6.)~~ Granville could not quite bring himself to swallow the idea of the French revanche, now brought up for the first time, but frequently to recur. He even wrote that Bismarck himself was a "greater danger to the peace of Europe:" but the offer was not without effect in calming the ~~remaining~~ fears of the Government. "My own impression is," said Granville, "That if things are left to take their own course, England, Germany, Austria and Italy will from common interests and from religious sympathies as regards England and Germany, act together. But if Germany was to begin a purely aggressive war, I doubt whether

Odo Russell to Granville, 11. ^{Jan.} 1.73., 8. ^{Feb.} 2.73., 11. ^{Feb.} 7.73., 10. ^{May} 3.73. 1873.
Granville Vol. II. p. 113. ⁶ The same, 15. ^{March} 1873., 21. ^{June} 1873.

anyone ~~could answer~~ ^{7.10} for the feeling in this country." The common interests shared by these four states were, in Granville's eyes, the need to oppose the influence of Russia and France. Austria, under the guidance of Andrassy, had finally thrown overboard the hope for revenge, and accepted Bismarck's friendly offers, entering into a "Dreikaiserbund" with Germany and Russia, and Italy was constrained by her isolation to follow her example. Granville, however, seems to have ignored the fact that Russia was the ^{first ally of Germany} ~~original member of this friendly league~~, and that Germany ~~at least~~ might hesitate to join Britain in resisting her. Bismarck's proposals of alliance were probably made only with the view of separating Britain and France. He always ^{felt doubtful of} ~~distrusted~~ Britain as an ally, regarding her as quite unreliable owing to her parliamentary system, and he was not likely to offer anything very definite to the man of whom he contemptuously said, "Professor Gladstone---nothing can be expected of him!" ^{8.5}

The conversations served his purpose, however, by convincing the British government that Germany wished to be friendly, and that ^{Britain had} ~~there was~~ nothing to be feared from her, ~~as far as Britain was concerned~~. Thus one more state acquiesced quietly in the domination of Germany. Austria and Italy had been already won over, and Russia was her old ally, while France was helpless. The ascendancy of Bismarck seemed complete: but it was not quite so secure as it appeared.

In the first place, the friendship of Russia was not so

Granville to Odo Russell, 31.12.73. Granville II. p. 115.
 "It is a favourite saying of Prince Bismarck's that he lost five years of his political life by the foolish belief that England was still a great power." Morier, 1.4.74. Morier, II. p. 330.
 April

Bismarck hoped.

deep and sincere as ~~it might appear~~. It is a remarkable proof of the blindness and feebleness of British statesmanship that Russia, who was Germany's ally, who had greatly profited by that alliance, and whose sovereign was the devoted friend of the Emperor William, was before her in realising the dangers of the situation. Russia was not directly threatened, for Bismarck was very anxious to keep her support; yet Russia was already wondering whether the price she had paid for her gains on the Black Sea had been ~~(perhaps)~~ too high. Bismarck was ~~(already)~~ obliged to admit that the meeting of the Three Emperors in September 1873, which was to have been a demonstration of the solidarity of the Northern Powers, had not been completely satisfactory. The Tsar had gone out of his way to assure M. Gontaut-Biron, the French ambassador, that France might be "certain that I would participate in nothing that might be attempted against her." ^{9.1-0}

Equally displeasing to
The second threat to the ascendancy of Germany was the unexpected ~~(and amazing)~~ recovery of France. That country had always possessed extraordinary resilience and recuperative power, but perhaps never before had they been so remarkably displayed. In spite of the losses of the war and the Commune, the cession of two of her richest provinces, and fact that nearly one third of her territory was occupied by a foreign army living at her expense, she contrived to pay off the instalments of the ~~(war)~~ indemnity in less than the prescribed time. Bismarck had believed that he had imposed such terms as would give him a hold on France for many years, and had counted on delays in the payment

and a long occupation of French territory. He was uneasy and displeased. He saw that he had miscalculated the vitality and the resources of France, and he was haunted by the fear that she would recover her position in Europe, find allies, and perhaps try to revenge herself on Germany. He made every excuse to delay the evacuation, and to find fault with the French authorities. His language, always brutal, became more and more ferocious, and finally flung France and Europe into a fever of alarm.

The Kulturkampf offered a handle of complaint against France. Bismarck had found a foeman worthy of his steel in Pius IX, whose combination of obstinate meekness and flaming indiscretion was excessively irritating. The contest was long-drawn-out, vicious, and indecisive. The position of the French government was made more awkward by a number of Roman Catholic bishops, who supported the Pope against the German Chancellor all the more heartily because they were Frenchmen, and who gave vent to their religious and patriotic indignation in reckless and vehement letters and speeches.

On October 20 Bismarck wrote to Count Harry Arnim, ambassador at Paris, that no government could be so mad, if it once understood that it would be forced into war, as to wait for the moment that best suited its enemy. The immediate outbreak of war would be better for Germany than this continual threat. Arnim conveyed these complaints and threats to Broglie, who gave public assurances of the peaceful intentions of France; but this was only the first move

10) G.F.O. I, No. 137.

11) Hanotaux II, p. 413 ff.

~~first move~~ ✓
 of a long campaign. On November 21st the Pope issued an encyclical letter deploring the condition of the church in ~~Germany~~, Italy, and Switzerland, which roused great indignation in these ~~same~~ countries, and brought the controversy to a more bitter stage. Bismarck's retaliatory measures brought protests from the French bishops, and the government of ~~France~~ publicly reprimanded the fiery prelates. But this was not enough for Bismarck, and he demanded that they should be prosecuted. "Well!" he declared, "We shall have to declare war against you before the clerical party, seizing power, makes war with Germany in the name of the persecuted Catholic Church." ^{(12) (10)} The extension of the Chancellor's attentions to Belgium was not a reassuring symptom. Immediately after a "confidential" circular, ~~from Bismarck became known~~ ^{he} ~~in which he~~ informed his subordinates that if he were once convinced that war was inevitable he would not let France choose the time. Rumours that mauser rifles were being distributed to the German army, and that Nancy was to be occupied, added to the disquiet. ~~The new year opened darkly.~~

~~"I am not very hopeful," wrote Lyons to Odo Russell, "But I think the chance of peace will be very much increased if we can tide over this year 1874. I can see no consolation for a fresh war. I suppose Bismarck would be ready to buy the neutrality of Russia with Constantinople, and that France will give Russia anything even for a little help."~~

~~The ambassador at Berlin replied in an even more lugubrious strain. "What can other powers, and particularly England, do to~~

help to preserve peace? ~~he wrote,~~ "A Coalition is impossible; advice or interference adds to Bismarck's excuses for going to war, so the only course Governments can follow is to let him do as he pleases and submit to the consequences, until he dies.... Do I attach any importance to the Emperor of Russia's pacific assurances? None whatever, Because Bismarck is prepared to buy his cooperation with anything he pleases in the East. Bismarck is now master of the situation at home and abroad. ⁽¹³⁾ The Emperor, the Ministers, the Army, the Press, and the National Majority in Parliament are instruments in his hands, whilst abroad he can so bribe the great Powers as to prevent a coalition and make them subservient to his policy."

There were, however, indications more cheerful for France. Though Russell discredited the "pacific assurances" of the Tsar, they were heartily welcomed in Paris. Ministerial changes had brought to the Foreign Ministry the Duc Decazes, a statesman eminently fitted to cope with this difficult situation. ~~He knew how to combine a patriotic dignity with the suaveness and pliability necessary in France's relations with Germany;~~ At once far-sighted and practical, quick, cautious, and subtle, he rendered his country service ^{more} nearly comparabbe with that of Talleyrand at Vienna.

Another event that brought encouragement to anxious hearts in Paris was the fall of the Liberal government in London in February 1874. The Conservatives when last in office had showed a friendly disposition to France, and ~~during the war Salisbury~~

~~one of the leaders, had written rather violently against Germany in the pages of the Quarterly and the Standard. Moreover the party were known to be less averse than their predecessors from an active foreign policy.~~

Their attitude at first was somewhat timid and discouraging to French hopes. Derby, the Foreign Secretary, was inclined to take ~~as~~ Odo Russell's lackadaisical point of view: Bismarck was unmanageable, and if he forced another war on France, well, it was "only Pretty Fanny's way." ^{The disposition of} The Prime Minister, however, was ~~a much more promising subject for the delicate experimenting of Decazes.~~

(Jew, poet, adventurer) The political principles of the day had but little meaning^x for Disraeli; but in a long political experience he had acquired a superficial familiarity with them, and he fully appreciated the necessity of paying deference to them, for the sake of their hold on public opinion, and ~~on that~~ ^{on} his colleagues. For the rest, he resembled Palmerston more than any other of his predecessors. ~~Both were great imperialists;~~ In both, flashes of genius alternated with fits of criminal carelessness and reckless folly. Palmerston was more to be blamed for neglect, owing to laziness, and Disraeli for folly, owing to a temper too romantic. The latter was incapable of taking politics seriously: great affairs were never^x quite real to him, but were transmuted in his sunny imagination to the materials of romance. He felt himself as the hero of one of his own novels: Endymion, grown old and frail, but hardly less sprightly. Parliamentary life was a tourney, international pol-

politics a game. His opinions varied from hour to hour. At one time he would credulously accept the most ridiculous rumours, at another would analyse and discriminate with coolness and cynicism in some difficult complication. With great gifts, considerable sense of honour, and sincere devotion to the state which he served, his ruling principle was still to ^xmake the most of circumstances, and indulge his passion for power and for romance. He was at his happiest playing his pretty game with the Queen, a compound of Burleigh, Leicester, and Spenser to her Gloriana.

33.

~~(His future was uncertain, but his history and character gave some clue to his probable conduct.) His poetic imagination offered as great a power of self-deception as that which insular breeding gave to his companions, so that at times he could be as blind to reality as they.)~~ He was very definitely and consciously out of sympathy with the Nationalist movement: he believed in race, not in nationality, and was therefore not likely to be influenced in his foreign policy by the principles of Nationalism and Self-Determination. On the other hand, though he paid outward homage, at times, to Non-Intervention, ^{would find it difficult} he was not likely to resist any chance that might offer to play a great rôle in international affairs, and would enjoy figuring at a Congress as heartily as Gortschakov.

His attitude during the war had been ~~one of~~ hostility to France. Once he had "preached that a good understanding with France should be the basis of British foreign policy," but he

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Diagrams, v. 126
Diagrams

had been converted by the publication of the Benedetti treaty, and had urged an armed neutrality for the defence of Belgium.

He had, however, been greatly vexed by the Russian coup, and its success, and by the somewhat ignominious result of the Alabama arbitration. He might, therefore, in his desire for a vigorous foreign policy, be ready to do something to oppose Bismarck's machinations.

The new Cabinet came into being in the midst of the growing alarm. Lyons laid stress, in his first report to Derby, on the fact that this year was likely to be critical. France was very weak, but even next year she would be less weak and "less tempting to national hatreds and to the military thirst for gold and glory which prevails with a party in Germany. But just now, if Bismarck chose to make a new war, nothing could prevent him."

Bismarck had now ceased his love-making to Britain, but, taken in conjunction with his attitude to France, his Schneicheleien of last year looked uncommonly like an attempt to secure British neutrality in case of a new war. The bishops were still skittish, and from Berlin reports of a serious nature were coming in. Odo Russell hoped that Bismarck's blustering, and Moltke's violent speech in the Reichstag, were

15) Lyons to Derby, 24 Feb. 1874. Lyons II, p. 54.

16) Speech of 16 Feb. 1874. He spoke of "the savage cry for revenge" in France, and demanded that Germany should have a "professional army," not a militia. This was in a debate on the military laws.

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only meant to reconcile public opinion to the large sacrifices demanded by the new army bill. This opinion was shared by Morier, who refused to believe Bismarck could be contemplating war. Soon after, however, Moltke told Russell himself that war was popular, must come sooner or later, and in his opinion had better come soon. Rumours spread that Germany was about to seize Belgium and Northern France. The Empress Augusta herself warned Gontaut-Biron to prepare for trouble, and Franz Josef went out of his way to express sympathetic anxiety for France. "We are living at the mercy of the smallest incident," wrote Decazes to a friend, "the least mistake. Our days are without rest and our nights without sleep."
17.

On the 4th of May Lord Russell was stirred by these rumours to demand that any papers dealing with the matter should be laid before Parliament. Derby replied in a tone ^{not at all} ~~that might have been~~ reassuring to Russell, but was not so to France. He hoped there was no present danger, though looking forward to the future there were great grounds for apprehension. There was a general desire in France to recover the lost provinces, and a general determination in Germany to keep them. War would probably be inevitable at some time. "It may be said...do what we may war will come sooner or later," but Derby, like Canning, "would prefer later." The government therefore would "leave no reasonable endeavour untried to preserve peace....without embroiling ourselves in a quarrel to which we were not a party," and would adhere to treaty engagements. In fact, Germany was allowed to understand that in a war with France she would have nothing to

from Britain except protests, unless she invaded Belgium; and even the declaration of adherence to treaties was given in somewhat vague and non-committal terms:--- the Government would be under obligation to defend treaties to which they were party, unless they had given other powers to understand first that they would not do so.

This was a blow to France: but ~~(much)~~ more reassuring was the Tsar's positive statement to the ambassador, le Flô, "There will be no war."

Still the alarm persisted. Warnings came secretly from Vienna. Belgium was known to be full of German spies. In summer came a dreadful rumour that the Hohenzollern Candidature in Spain was to be revived. Spain was still kingless, for an attempt to establish ~~a Savoy prince~~ *Amadeo of Savoy* had failed, and Prim had been assassinated. Complaints from Spain, that France was giving assistance to the Carlists, were obviously made in collusion with Germany. The situation was tense; but Decazes had a card up his sleeve. In the early days of December he secretly interviewed ~~a grave young gentleman, seventeen years old;~~ *the Prince of the Asturias* and a few days afterwards, a sudden change of government in Madrid led to the recall of the Prince of the Asturias, and trouble from the side of the Pyrenees ~~(suddenly)~~ ceased. It was the first ghost of a success for French diplomacy---he had always been ~~"their candidate."~~ The visit to Paris of the Tsaritsa and Tsarevich had been

Speech of 4 May 1874
 Hansard CCXVIII. This method of wriggling out of a guarantee may be compared with Gladstone's, who in the following year "quoted with approval" Palmerston's saying that a guarantee did not give the guaranteed right to demand help, but only gave the guarantor a casus belli if he wanted it. (Forster, II, p. 108.)

Soon after
 another good omen, and now came a sudden change of front in London. Perhaps Schouvalov had been sowing good seed there; at any rate Disraeli, in his speech at the Guildhall, made the most friendly references to France, congratulating her on her swift recovery, and the "magnanimity and prudence of her present rulers." This encouragement was needed, for it followed on a speech of the German Emperor to the Reichstag, requesting military supplies, and making use of the expression: "I know that on the day when these hostile sentiments are translated into action the whole nation and its princes are ready to join me in defending the honour and rights of the Empire."

The new German military laws, passed this year, ~~had~~ disturbed all Europe. Instead of being reduced, ~~the strength of~~ the army was ~~actually~~ increased. Against whom were these armaments directed? Neighbouring states naturally looked to their defences Russia introduced measures on the same lines as those of Germany ---France speeded up her military reorganisation---even Britain had been feebly tinkering at her army in a haphazard ~~sort of~~ way. ~~since the war~~ Bismarck now complained that the new French law of conscription (similar to that of Germany) and the proposal to add^x a fourth battalion to each regiment, were direct threats to Germany. 42.

A lull during the winter was followed by a sudden revival of the war scare in the spring of 1875. It commenced with a violent attack on Belgium, whom Bismarck accused of using her neutrality as a shelter for onslaughts on the peace and security of her

neighbours. The Catholic bishops were again the culprits, and Belgium in breathless haste amended her penal laws so as to be able to prosecute them. Disraeli was by now disturbed. "We shall 43. have no more quiet times in diplomacy," he wrote, "but shall be kept in a state of unrest for a long time, probably till the beginning of the next Thirty Years' War." The dispatch to Belgium was communicated to France in a very pointed manner, and was contemporaneous with a prohibition of the export of horses from Germany. France had received, "from two of the most exalted personages of Europe," a secret warning, ---"You will be attacked in spring." This was followed later by another from the same source---"War has been postponed till autumn." Decazes confided 44. his fears to the British government, and begged their support, but their only action as yet was to let Lyons come home on long leave. Odo Russell's letters were now reassuring; it was very wearing to the nerves, he said, but would blow by. Bismarck, who did not find flattery so effective with the new government as with the old, had gone off on a new tack, and had been giving ~~confidential warnings that Russia was very unfriendly to Britain,~~ confidential warnings that Russia was very unfriendly to Britain, and this may have put them off the track. "Bismarck has given us

19) Disraeli to Derby, 18 April, 1875. Beaconsfield, V, p. 420.

20) Hanotaux, III, p. 217.

21) "I do not know and cannot conjecture the cause of Decazes' anxiety. Nothing has passed or is passing in any part of Europe to justify alarm as to an early disturbance of general peace. But I hear of a similar feeling of uneasiness at Berlin, and the Russian government is credited with designs as to the nature of which no two persons agree... Dead calm for the moment. I cannot conceive any reason why you should not take your leave when you wish it. Paris is always within reach if anything new turns up." Derby to Lyons, 16 March 1875. Lyons, II, p. 71.

20 through Odo Russell a serious warning," Derby told Lyons, "Ag- 48
 ainst the unfriendly feelings of the Russian government towards
 England. He may be only trying to stir up jealousy, a game he
 often plays or he may be sincere. I take his hint as one not to
 be slighted yet not infallibly trusted." 22)

In April the crisis came. The campaign was opened by the
Berlin Post, with its notorious article; "Is War in Sight?" The
Kölnische Zeitung followed with a positive assertion that France
 was preparing for a war of revenge. Other papers, also semi-off-
 icial, chimed in with a more peaceful note. Decazes again appeal-
 ed to Britain, and Derby was at last startled, Disraeli a little 46
 stimulated by the excitement. "Bismarck is really another old
 Bonaparte," and he must be bridled," he wrote loftily, but with-
 out specifying who was to bell the cat. The centre of interest, 23)
 however, was now neither London nor Paris, nor even Berlin, but
 St Petersburg. Decazes, playing his lone game, was far too wise
 to neglect Britain, but his hopes were in the north; for he be-
 lieved that if Russia failed her, France must face the worst.
 France was, indeed, preparing for the worst; feverishly building
 up those armaments which Morier called, "The armaments of despair," 24)
 the armaments of a people qui a la mort dans l'ame." Whether
 Russia would indeed

22) Derby to Lyons, 16 March 1875. Lyons, II, p. 71.

23) Beaconsfield VII, p. 421. No date given except April 1875.

24) "A well-informed Frenchman said to me... 'These armaments
 are the last resource of a drowning man. We know that the highest
 military authorities of Germany do not cease from urging the nec-
 essity of a new war to correct the shortcomings of the last, and
 have laid it down as an unanswerable axiom that a new war with
 us is necessary before we have regained our normal condition....
 We know that no preparation we can make can secure us victory,
 but we must at least be able to die with dignity.'" Morier to the
 Crown Prince Frederick, 9(?) May 1875. Morier, II, p. 348.

intervene must be uncertain, for the Tsar's affection for the German Emperor was always a source of danger. ^{and} Germany, too, was bidding for the Russian alliance. In February, Radowitz had temporarily replaced the German ambassador at Petersburg, and it was believed that he had instructions to offer a free hand in the East, in exchange ⁽²⁵⁾ for a promise of non-intervention between Germany^x and France. He had been told that this time Russia would make no bargain, and since this Decazes had been hopeful. The French ambassador, le Flô, came home with Gortschakov's guarantee that there would be no war, and on his return to his post, armed with heart-rending appeals from the wily Decazes, Gortschakov visited him ^{immediate} before he was out of bed to repeat the friendly assurances, and the Tsar was even more explicit. Alexander had an impulsive generosity, and Decazes had known exactly how to flatter his self-esteem: how could he refuse to cast his shield across suffering France? "Our two countries have interests in common, and if, as I refuse to believe, you were one day seriously threatened, you would soon know it," and after a pause ^{49.} ---"You would know it through me." If Germany should attack France, he added, through his teeth, "It would be at her own risk and peril." Gortschakov frankly told le Flô that he would not have committed himself so far; but Decazes was jubilant. ⁽²⁶⁾ He wrote a grateful letter, but suggested that Berlin might be concealing something from the Tsar. Would not His Imperial Majesty declare that "he would consider a surprise as an insult, and that he would not allow such an iniquity to take place?" If, in the end, Russia should be taken by surprise, Decazes was confident ^{50.} Hanotaux III. p. 218 ff. ⁽²⁵⁾ Radowitz told Gontaut-Brion that it was Germany to attack France, on philanthropic, moral, and religious grounds." Morier, II, p. 363.

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confident that the Tsar "will cover with his sword those who rested on his support." De Flo, in a terrible fright, handed the (original) letter to the Tsar, and got the warmest assurances. "Au revoir, I shall remember," was the Imperial goodbye, "And I hope there will be no surprises." Gortschakov and his master were bound for Berlin. (27) -

(28) F

Meanwhile the storm was raging again. Hohenlohe had delivered a peremptory message from Bismarck, definitely declaring that the French army reorganisation was directed to an attack on Germany. Nothomb, the Belgian envoy, came in a panic to Odo Russell, saying that Moltke had just told him that a war could not be avoided unless the great powers intervened to induce France to reduce her armaments; while Bismarck had told him that Belgium must get her army ready, as France was about to invade Belgium. Nothomb was convinced that Bismarck meant to annex Belgium.

This was more and more alarming, but as yet the British diplomatists preserved their apathetic and despairing attitude, and did not seem to consider the possibility of doing anything to avert the crisis.

"The prospect of another war fills me with horror and disgust," wrote Odo Russell, "And if Bismarck lives a few years longer I do not see how it can be prevented." (29)

Derby looked about for a catspaw. "Is there no hope of Russian interference to preserve peace? It cannot be the interest of Russia to have France destroyed and Germany omnipotent. If the Czar were to say that a new war must not take place, and

De Hanotaux, III. p. 229. He had succeeded Arnim as ambassador at Paris. (29) 24.4.75. Lyons II. p. 73.

that he would not allow it, Bismarck would hardly undertake to fight Russia and France combined. I see little other prospect of averting mischief, and if it begins, where is it to end? Even here, and notwithstanding the sympathy felt in the main for the Protestant German Empire...there would be a great revulsion of feeling.... The English public knows little about foreign concerns, but it does understand that hitting a man when he is down is not fair play, and I think in the rest of Europe fear and jealousy of the predominant power would give France many adherents. I do what I can to point this out in a quiet and friendly way: but without being sanguine.

"May 4. The conversation about Belgium in the House of Lords last night led to no result. I think I see a growing feeling, indicated by the language of the press, that the German demands are not necessarily unreasonable, and that we should at least hear more of the case before pronouncing judgment."

More efficient service for the cause of peace was done by Britten's less important representative at Munich than by the ambassador at Vienna. The calm resignation of Odo Russell was not to be expected from one of Morier's enthusiastic temperament. His friends, the few old Liberals who were still fighting Bismarckism, had warned him in March. An ominous aspect of the situation was that Bismarck had won over the Crown Prince to a war policy, and Morier's friends begged him to use his influence to open Frederick's eyes to the truth, and also to press Derby to action. Morier appealed to the prince in the strongest terms,

to O. Russell, 4.5.75. Lyons II. p 75. On March 27 Gaffcken wrote, "You see we may have a pretty hot summer, but we must see what/

and with great effect; and possibly his despatches helped to determine the government on a more active course. 31)

Two other events occurred to rouse Derby and his colleagues from apathy. One was the return of Schouvalov, bearing friendly overtures from his government to that of Britain. He stopped at Berlin, gave reassuring messages to Odo Russell, and, apparently, warned Bismarck and was disbelieved. At the same time, if Münster is to be credited, Beust induced Derby to consider the idea of collective action with Russia and Austria in the interests of France. 32)

The second event was the publication by the Times, on May 6, of Blowitz' famous article reporting the fears that were agitating France. A leader, in the same issue, belittled the report,

31) On March 28 Geffcken warned Morier "We may have a pretty hot summer, but we must see what forces can be opposed to this four furieux who wants to stake Germany's future on his blind policy!" On May 4 he wrote: "If he (Bismarck) succeeds in winning over the Russians he will act immediately, and ask categorically in Paris, what signify the hastened armaments? I am convinced that all this is a sham, and that Bismarck puts (it) forward because he wants an outlet from his internal difficulties; but it is never the less a given theme, and he has won over not only Moltke, but I am afraid, also the Crown Prince, who is expressly coming back from Italy for the interview, and if Bismarck succeeds will return to Italy and establish a conformity of action between the Roman cabinet and the Northern Powers....." He urged Morier to see the Crown Prince, "And convince him that Bismarck is leading him into a snare; you must do everything to see him on his way from Italy to Berlin. When he returns thence it may be too late!" A full account of Morier's interview and letters to the Prince may be found in Morier, II, p. 323 ff. Morier's biographer believes that Bismarck's attack on Morier and Geffcken in 1888 (when the latter was tried for publishing the Crown Prince's diary) was due to a desire for revenge for the part they had played in checkmating his plans in 1875.

32) "The good news he brought respecting our relations with Russia filled me with delight after the dark allusions made to me here at court and by the Chancellor during the winter. As regards Germany and the war rumours...the Emperor of Russia...will insist on the maintenance of the peace of Europe, even at the cost of a rupture with Germany." Russell to Derby, 6 May 1875, Lyons, II, p. 76.

33) Münster to G.F.O., 7 June 1875, G.F.O., I, No. 186.

and took a tone not very friendly to France; but it stated with some force that the schemes attributed to Germany "would be more worthy of a barbarian conqueror than of a civilised state." 34) 54.

34) Times, 6 May 1875. Blowitz's article, according to his own account, was inspired by Decazes, to prepare the ground for the Tsar's visit. According to Decazes, it was inspired by Hohenlohe, who wanted to spoil Bismarck's plans.

The result of this article was an indignation so general and so ^{hot} ~~fierce~~ that not only did the Times assume in its later issues a tone much more condemnatory to Germany, but the government was stirred from its inaction. Derby spoke strongly to Gavard, the French chargé d'affaires: "Such an aggression would arouse general indignation in Europe... You may count upon me; you may depend upon my government not to fail in its [^]duty; I give ^{ss.} you, regarding this, every assurance that can be given by the minister of a constitutional sovereign." ^{(35) %} Gavard remarked that this did not mean much; but the government was really moving. Victoria wrote, for the second time, a personal appeal to the German Emperor; ~~and she expressed herself strongly~~; Odo Russell received instructions to remonstrate; Italy and Austria were requested to join Britain and Russia in putting pressure on Berlin; The Times at the same time assured Germany that if such a course were really contemplated, alarm would be so general that "Germany would soon be confronted by an international league." ^{(36) &}

At this auspicious moment the Tsar and Gortschakov arrived ^{56.}

~~Times, 6.7.75. Blowitz's article, according to his own account was inspired by Decazes, to prepare the ground for the Tsar's visit. According to Decazes, it was inspired by Hohenlohe, who wanted to spoil Bismarck's plan. Hanotaux III. Times, 10.7.75.~~ ^{may} ⁽³⁵⁾ ²⁴² ⁽³⁶⁾

at Berlin. A peace campaign immediately opened in the semi-official press, which assured the world that German relations with France had never been better. After private interviews between the two Emperors and ~~the~~ two Chancellors, Gortschakov went to the French and British Embassies, and told Gontaut-Biron and ~~and~~ Russell that peace was assured, and Bismarck's demeanour dove-like. (He was perhaps not aware that Bismarck had sent in his resignation, which the Emperor had refused.) The Tsar gave the same assurances: "Rely on me and do not be anxious." At this moment the remonstrances of the other powers began to come in, and as one diplomat after another repaired to the foreign ministry with solemn air and words of warning, there was glee in the French Embassy. On May 12th, Gortschakov capped the climax by issuing the famous circular, which commenced: "Maintenant la paix est assurée," and ^{for} which Bismarck never forgave him.

"Peace is secured," wrote Geffcken to Morier, "...since his return from Wiesbaden the Emperor spoke decidedly in the sense of peace; there must have been strong influences to bring him to the positive declaration that he would not hear of war. But the most important was that England and Russia arrived at an understanding ^{that} there should be no war; Lord Derby and Schouvalov have both acted with a decisiveness which left no room for a doubt that every attempt to separate them would fail. As soon as Bismarck saw this, he felt obliged to give in, and the world was startled by the article in the Norddeutsche, that it was all the fault of the Press, if any uneasiness about war had prevailed."

⑥ Hanotaux III. p. 246. Morier, II. The contention sometimes brought forward, that the Emperor knew nothing of Bismarck's plans, only needed to be informed of them by the Tsar, will hardly hold water. See, for example, his letter to Bismarck 11. 75. G.F.O.I. no. 162, his marginal note on Berlin. G.F.O.I. no. 163.

Almost everyone was charmed that ⁺Bismarck had received a slap in the face. The government in London ~~was much relieved,~~ ^{and} pleased with the gratitude of France, which, effusively expressed by Decazes, seemed a little excessive to Lyons, who knew well enough what British intervention had been worth. Derby was well satisfied. "I do not believe, to tell you the truth, that Prince Bismarck really contemplated such a war, but he wished to ³⁹prove general opinion, and he has his answer now." Odo Russell wrote with some enjoyment that Bismarck had assured him that "Good offices, support, sympathy in his efforts to keep the peace, was just what he longed for; our demonstration against French armaments ^{was} most welcome to him, and so he was happy at last to see Russia and England united in peace to Germany. But behind our backs Bismarck raves like a maniac, and swears he will take his revenge." ⁴⁰

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The Russians also were highly delighted. They had had a royal opportunity for un beau geste, and had shown that Russia had regained all that she had lost in 1856. She had proved herself the only power strong and self-confident enough to stand between Bismarck triumphant and his victim.

But in Paris, above all, there was exquisite relief, ~~for a~~ ^{nightmare-like} peril passed, and post-imperial France, struggling for her footing, felt all the steadying influence of a diplomatic success. "I feel that the Chancellor is furious with you," wrote Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, "And, I feel quite proud to add, with me also. We have disturbed his game, and we intend to do so

61.

Manotaux III
p. 25-9.

(40.)

may
% O. Russell to Mowat 15.5.75. Mowat. p. 355.

again... As to the situation itself, you can see what it is. Someone cannot console himself for having warned Europe, and thoroughly intends not to repeat that mistake. 'It is by the sound of Prussian guns in Champagne that Europe will learn our designs in the future,' he said a few days ago. ^(41.) ~~I think I am justified in saying that the Emperor Alexander left Jugenheim by no means reassured."~~

So ended the 1875 War Scare, one of the most mysterious episodes in Bismarck's career. For German policy in the affair we have very little information, beyond the will-o'-the-wispish light cast by Bismarck's own "Reminiscences." ^(42.)

Most authorities conclude that Bismarck did not really intend to go to war; but in ~~that~~ case, what did he intend?

The suggestion of Lord Derby, that he merely wished to test public opinion, will not ^{hold} bear water. Whatever view we take of the incident, we must admit that Bismarck made a mistake; but it strains our credulity to believe that he made so abject a fool of himself as Derby's view would imply. Surely he could have ascertained the opinion of Europe without laying himself open to the worst humiliation of his ~~career~~ career? Surely he must have been playing for larger gains, when he staked so much on the throw? The same applies to the suggestion that he was trying to test the durability of the Russian Alliance. If that were true it would recall the old method of finding whether a puling babe was a changeling (or human) by putting it on the top of the fire.

Manotaux III. Decazes to Gontaut-Biron, 29.8.75. ^{June} p. 254.
 (see above, p. 42) The G.F.O. papers for this period have many gaps.

(or dropping a suspected witch into the horsepond to see if she would float.)

^{Two}
There remain ~~three~~ possible explanations.

(While the scare was at its height, Bismarck mystified Gontaut-Biron by sending for him and entering upon a long monologue about the situation in the Near East. Gontaut-Biron could make neither head nor ~~tail~~ of the matter, but it has been suggested that Bismarck's aim was to induce France to cooperate with Germany in the East: as the Australian aborigines woo their brides by clubbing them on the head with a big stick. Bismarck was a Prussian Junker, and ^etherefore this explanation is not absolutely ~~incredible~~.)

^{First}
Secondly, there is the possibility that Bismarck merely wished to frighten France out of any attempt to strengthen her position by alliances. If so, he singularly failed ^{of} his object. If a Franco-Russian alliance was not formed after 1875, it was not due to Bismarck's conduct then.

^{Second}
The ~~third~~ explanation is that Bismarck, startled and angry at the rapid recovery of France, began to regret that he had not inserted a clause into the Treaty of Frankfort limiting the numbers of the French army, and that he now hoped to obtain this neglected advantage by offering France the choice between such a limitation and a new war.

This is a sufficient and plausible explanation: but there is some evidence ~~that seems~~ to show that Bismarck really meant to go to war. If we once accept his point of view, that France

64.

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was/
 an obstacle that must be **removed** from Germany's path, he had every motive for a new war. German unity had been obtained; but Bismarck aimed at making Germany predominant in Europe, and how could this be possible if a very strong state, an irreconcilable enemy, existed upon one of her frontiers? Bismarck's attitude towards France was characteristic: he was convinced that she would nurse the idea of revenge, as persistently as ^{Prussia} Germany had ^{66.} nursed it since Jena, ~~and that the softening effect of time, considerations of prudence or necessity, and the preference for peace of an agricultural and industrial people would not be trusted to eliminate this idea.~~ His fear of France after 1871 was almost a morbid obsession, and ^{speaks of a bad conscience;} ~~is some evidence that he felt the culpability of his part in provoking the war.~~ His hatred of France had always blinded him. In 1871, it had led him to underestimate the resolution and patriotism of her people, and to regard her as thoroughly decadent. Now, it led him to an exaggerated fear of what she would do, when she recovered her strength, to revenge herself on Germany. He did not see that her recovery, extraordinary as it was, was due to certain qualities ^x in the character of her people, ⁽⁴³⁾ not to any miraculous strength, any ^{67.} magic Excalibur that quenched the bleeding of her wounds. In reality, ^{she} was not likely, ~~(after the lesson she had learnt)~~ ever to regain either the power or the will to be an aggressive military state: But Bismarck dared not believe this. He had scoffed at those who in 1871 had warned him that his policy would breed a desire for revenge ~~in~~ France, because he believed that he

And to good luck: it was said that the remarkable harvests of 1872 and 1874 paid the indemnity.

had so crippled her that she would never be strong enough to be dangerous. Now he saw his mistake. No doubt he would have been ^{content} ~~satisfied~~, if necessary, to obtain the limitation of her armaments: but that could only have lasted for a certain length of time. ~~(From his point of view)~~ ^{and} another war, involving the destruction of some of her natural resources, and the annexation of more of her territory to Germany, would have been much more sure and satisfactory. 66.

In such a war, he could count on the support of a large body of public opinion in Germany. Victory had not quenched the German hate of France. With his control of the press it was easy to manufacture a public opinion, and the German public has always been docile in such matters. ^{and} The military classes and their leaders were thirsty for war, ~~(and ready to prove that it was not only justifiable but unavoidable.)~~ 67.

The chief argument against the view that Bismarck wanted a new war is the reckless imprudence, so unlike his usual mixture of caution and daring, with which his preparations were undertaken. ^{But} Even if he did not mean war, but only wanted to secure ~~it is still equally difficult to account for~~ the limitation of the French army, however, his carelessness in laying himself open to a humiliating rebuff, ~~is still extraordinary.~~ ^{it is as easy to account for the one as the other.} 68.

It seems strange that a statesman of Bismarck's quality did not realise that his conduct was more likely to provoke the very danger he most feared---an understanding between France and Russia and Britain---than any other possible course. Prussian statecraft, however, has always been inclined to believe that 70.

success may be obtained by bullying, ~~a belief not invariably correct. "Terrorism" had always been a favourite method. There was, moreover, good grounds for believing that it would be successful in 1874-5, as it had been in 1870-1.~~ ^{In 1870-1,} Bismarck had bribed Russia, and frightened Britain and Austria, ~~then,~~ and he believed he could do the same thing now. He was ~~(of course)~~ ^{govt.} quite mistaken: he was wrong in believing that the Conservative government in London would be quite as easily frightened as the Liberals had been, and wrong in believing that public opinion in Britain would be anything but indignant to see a strong power brutally bullying ^a ~~two~~ ⁽⁴⁴⁾ weak ones. He was equally astray as far as Russia was concerned: he underrated both the strength of the French Party that was growing up in the Russian court, ~~and~~ the generosity of the Tsar, who was not to be bribed to stand aside and watch the destruction of France completed, and the astuteness of Gortschakov, who saw that further reduction of the power of France would be dangerous to Russia.

His stupendous success, his exhaustion after his great efforts, and the uncontrollable fits of temper which he allowed to master him more and more, account for Bismarck's blindness. ~~to all this.~~ It was a lapse of judgment, as the Luxembourg incident had been, and it was repaired, though not so quickly or so completely, as that earlier mistake had been. Very possibly Bismarck was not quite himself in 1875. He was intensely worried and irritated by the Kulturkampf. Odo Russell reports that Schouvalov, when he visited Berlin, "insinuated that he thought

Odo Russell's feeble acquiescence may have deceived Bismarck as to the probable tone both of government and public opinion in Great Britain.

(45) Bismarck a little out of his mind at times." Something of this might have been due to the malady of "swelled head," from which the greatest of empire-builders are not immune, ^{though} Bismarck was really remarkably free from this weakness, but certainly after 1871 he might be expected to be a little above himself.

If he did not mean war, he deceived his most confidential friends and colleagues. (46) Moltke and the military leaders, the ^{ambassador} diplomatic representative at London, and the Crown Prince, were convinced that he meant war, and were for the most part in favour of it. The very force with which he repudiated such intentions, the viciousness of his resentment against Gortschakoy, the Tsar, and Victoria, and his anxiety to know who it was that had wakened the suspicions of the British government, are in themselves suspicious. (47) Decazes shared his hostility: Bismarck asserted that he had invented the whole affair for stock-jobbing purposes!

"So far was I from entertaining any such idea at the time," said Bismarck later, "That I would rather have resigned than lent a hand in picking a quarrel." (48) At the time he ^{laid the blame on} made Moltke his scapegoat. Later, returning Victoria's letter to his master, he ^{laid} blamed Münster. "At this day, as in 1867 in the Luxembourg Question," he wrote to William, "I should never advise Your Majesty to begin a war at once, on the score of a likelihood that our enemy would afterwards begin it better prepared. For this we can never sufficiently predict the ways of divine Providence. But, on the other hand, it is not advantageous to give our enemy the security that we shall in any case await his attack. Therefore I should not."

(45) to Derby, 8.5.75. Lyons 11.4. Hohenlohe seems to have been puzzled, see his despatch G.F.O. I, 160. Is he to let French excitement run its natural course, or endeavour to calm it? He will be grateful for any communication on the real lie of affairs (zusammenhang). In his Memoirs he denies that war was ever contemplated, however. (47) See letters to Münster, G.F.O., I, Chap. 7. (48) & Reminiscences II, p. 281. "Bismarck said it was Moltke. Emperor much displeased with Moltke. Bismarck very abusive of Moltke. By common consent Moltke should on this occasion be made the scapegoat." (49) Morier's account, Morier II, p. 353.

be inclined to blame Münster if he had let fall an occasional remark to that effect, and this would by no means give the English government the right to base official action upon the unofficial speeches of an ambassador, and sans nous dire gave call upon the other powers to bring pressure to bear upon us."

Bismarck represents himself as "sharply reproaching" Gortschakov, "My cutting invectives made him sing rather small, but he combated the facts which I considered established without showing his usual security and fluency, thus causing me to conclude that he was doubtful whether his imperial master would approve his proceedings. This was further confirmed on my complaining to the Emperor Alexander," who laughed, and said, "That I must not take this vanité sénile too seriously. The disapproval thus expressed never found sufficient authentic expression to rid the world of the myth of our intending to attack France in 50) 1875." Notwithstanding this gracious reception from the Tsar, Bismarck was so annoyed that he refused to go to the station to 51) see the Imperial visitor off.

The incident of 1875 was perhaps the most serious reverse of Bismarck's career. His policy towards France was, of course, 77. checkmated, and he was forced to resign himself to see her gradually regain much of her lost influence. Far more alarming

50) Bismarck, II, p. 297.

51) Morier, p. 363-4, also gives some suggestive details.

than this was the possibility of a friendly understanding between Britain and Russia, which the incident suggested. France, in that case, would no longer have to choose between these two neighbours, but could maintain good relations with both of them. By his masterly policy in the next few years, Bismarck succeeded in destroying all chance of this, while at the same time satisfying his desire for revenge on Russia. The course adopted by Britain gave him his opportunity.

II.

"It is curious," wrote Disraeli, just after the War Scare, "But since the fall of France, who used to give us so much alarm and so much trouble, the conduct of foreign affairs for England has become infinitely more difficult. There is no balance, and unless we go out of our way to act with the three Northern Powers, they can act without us, which is not agreeable for a state like England."⁵²⁾

The words seem to have been one of his suggestive meditations, thrown off casually, and never seriously taken up. The new government had no policy, except to make a splash.⁵³⁾ The Prime Minister was an old man now, with failing powers, though his intellect often flashed as brightly as ever. He had arrived, at last, at the goal of a long, doubtful struggle, he knew he was not likely to hold office again, and that if he wished to prank himself before Europe in some such rôle as his great contemporaries played, he had no time to lose. He was on the look-out for an opportunity for himself and his country to take up a central position that would let him move in splendour across the stage, and vanish "trailing clouds of glory." "Live in a blaze and in a blaze expire' would content me," he wrote, "But I won't be snuffed out."⁵⁴⁾

He had, therefore, no definite object, save that he meant to avoid the mistakes of indecision, pusillanimity, and priggishness made by his predecessors. Hence the crisis which was waiting for them when they came into office found the Conservatives

52) To Lady Bradford, 6 Sept. 1875. 53) "Die hiesigen staatsmänner kommen mir immermehr als reiche dilettanten vor, welche von einem tage zum andern leben, an die zukünftigen Machtstellung ihres landes nicht denken, und sich die Situation nicht ganz klar machen." Munster to Bismarck, 28 June 1877. G.F.O., II, No. 295.

54) To Lady Bradford, 10 November 1875.

~~Conservatives~~ unprepared, and their handling of it was at first uncertain, though in the end some of the reflected glory of Russia fell upon them. When they at last began to act with energy the critical period was practically over, and ~~their~~ remonstrances served chiefly to add to the irritation of Bismarck, over the defeat he had already suffered at the hands of Russia, and to make a public demonstration of European solidarity against German aggression, which, useful as it was at the time, was ^{in reality} ~~really~~, as will be seen, illusory. (45) @

^{being} Only after assured that Russia meant to act did they dare to take up a determined attitude against Germany. Had Russia not been ready to move, they would probably have been able to persuade themselves that the limitation of French armaments would be a useful security for European peace. Disraeli may have considered the possibility, if Bismarck was obstinate, of going to war with Russia as an ally in defence of France, and Salisbury might have supported him in this, though his affection for

Queen Victoria's letter certainly had a great effect on the mind of the Emperor, and some authorities maintain that it was entirely William's action that caused the retreat of Bismarck. The Emperor, they maintain, was as ignorant as an infant of all that had been going on, and as soon as he was apprised of it by the Queen he interfered and put a stop to it. It is rather difficult to believe this, when the European press was ringing with it, diplomats talking of nothing else, and a great part of the agitation in 1874 had been due to William's own speech in the Reichstag. (see above, p. 4) Did he never read a newspaper, and was he kept in absolute ignorance of his own foreign ministers' doings? Queen Victoria wrote to remonstrate with him in 1874, without having the slightest effect on his mind, or Bismarck's policy. Bismarck had already persuaded his peace-loving master into three wars, one of which was contrary to his conscience and his wishes, and he might have persuaded him to another. He had already converted the Crown Prince. No doubt Victoria's letter awoke the old man to what foreign powers were feeling about German policy, and so acted as a support to the remonstrances of Russia. Some passages in Buckle, VI, seem to indicate this.

Even if Disraeli had been ready to take strong action, France (was not so hot as it had been before it was tamed by office: but), no power would have moved Derby. With that states-
 man's native caution and prudence had become almost a morbid affec-
 tion. Still reasonable, sensible, and just in theory, he now shrank from every kind of action (in support of his views) and anything so dangerous as threatening war to Germany, even with Russia and France at his back, would have frightened him out of his wits. The Liberals relied on him to hold his reckless col-
 leagues to the Liberal policy of Non-Intervention. Three years later Disraeli and Salisbury found it was only possible to carry out a decided foreign policy by doing the work of the foreign office over his head, but In 1875 they were not ^{neither} strong enough, (or convinced enough), to do this.

How slight was the impression made by the incident, how great the anxiety that it should not lead to a coolness with Germany, may be seen by the fact that it was scarcely over when Derby made the friendliest advances. The only interest of England, he told Münster, was to keep the peace in Europe, and for this there was no better guarantee than a strong Germany. England had no diverging interests with Germany, as she had with France, and no intelligent Englishman could shut out the con-
 viction that a too strong France must normally be more dangerous for England than a strong Germany. He heartily deplored, therefore, the momentary ill-humour, and hoped that good relations, the best understanding and confidence, between the two countries would soon be restored, and grow ever stronger. (11) 56

The real cause of Bismarck's defeat was the action of the Tsar: but the British efforts, feeble though they were, were still of the highest importance. They indicated a tendency towards a more determined foreign policy and a greater interest in European affairs, and also towards a departure from the old attitude of suspicion and veiled hostility to Russia.

British statesmen, however, quickly proceeded to throw away all the advantage that had been gained. For the next few years Bismarck's chief object was to prevent Russia from approaching the Western Powers, and to prevent the Western Powers from coming to an understanding between themselves. The only really safe way of restraining Russia was to renew the alliance with her, but this, in his present mood, he would not do. A crisis in the East was developing, and if it led to a quarrel between Russia and Austria, he could not keep on good terms with both of them; he must choose one or other. It was in part the conduct of Russia in 1875 that decided him to choose Austria. To avoid the danger that Russia might turn to the Western Powers, he did his best to sow distrust ^{between them}, by secret insinuations, and by warning each power against the others.

57) He had, of course, many other motives.

An opportunity of making mischief between France and Britain soon occurred. In November 1875, Disraeli bought the Suez Canal shares, and ^{much} ~~some~~ resentment was aroused in France. Britain had always opposed the construction of the Canal, Palmerston had declared the enterprise was an act of enmity towards Britain; it had been a French enterprise, financed by French capital and conceived and executed by a French engineer. Now, it was said, when the success of the Canal had been demonstrated, when France in her weakness was unable to give it the necessary support, Britain stepped in and secured the control and the profits. Bismarck was heartily delighted at this turn of opinion in France. He sent congratulations to Disraeli, and offered of German support, and from this time on he continued to urge Britain to annex Egypt, well aware that nothing would so infuriate France.

~~Trouble was brewing in the Balkans, and if Britain would only follow her old policy there, she might be left alone to embroil herself with Russia. Unluckily for Bismarck the circumstances were such that it seemed some modification of the British eastern policy was inevitable. Public opinion in Europe was so strong against Turkey, and Russia had so much reason for posing as the champion of civilisation and justice, that it was difficult to see how Britain could oppose her, without abandoning her claim to a superior morality.~~

^{As to Russia,}
The government were not left unwarned of Bismarck's aims and wishes. On November 12th Odo Russell submitted a memorandum in which they were indicated with sufficient clearness.

"Since May," wrote the ambassador, "It has become manifest

that Russia has the power to hamper the movements of Germany... and that Germany can undertake nothing new without the passive consent of Russia. This power must be so intolerable to Bismarck that he is sure to exercise all his skill in drawing Russia out of the combined arms of the Great Powers, back into his own exclusive embrace. This, a difference between Austria and Russia about Turkey, might enable him to achieve. Bismarck's endeavours⁷⁹ last winter to make us suspicious of Russia, and vice versa, are now fully explained. His failure must add to the general irritation he suffers from.... In regard to Oriental affairs, Gortschakov, instead of being satisfied to act with his German and Austrian allies exclusively, has sought to keep up an equally balanced understanding with England, France, and Italy; from which Bismarck suspects that Gortschakov does not mean to let him have his own way and wishes to control Germany through the united action and agreement of the other European powers. This does not suit his book, and above all he fears that Russia wishes to keep⁸⁰ on good terms with England and France; which would, in his opinion, neutralize the exclusive action of the three Northern Powers, over which he hoped to establish his own influence to the exclusion of all other Governments.... The joint action of Russia and England last May... took him by surprise, destroyed his fondest calculations, and left him isolated and disappointed to reflect⁸¹ on the possibility of a peace coalition against Germany."

Lyons confirmed Russell's view, remarking that "It is on

this"(the Eastern)"question that he would have the best chance 91.
of embroiling her" (Britain) "with Russia." (59)

In the summer of 1875 the people of Herzegovina revolted against Turkish rule, the insurrection being secretly encouraged by Russian and Austrian agents. Though the beginnings were small the rebels were not put down, and in a short time the Porte went bankrupt. Turkish misgovernment was so clearly demonstrated that there was a general feeling that immediate action should be taken to ensure that the reforms so often promised should at last be carried out. Austria, Russia, and Germany, united in the Andrassy Note, pressing reforms on Turkey, and Britain, with hesitation and manifest disinclination, acceded to it, perhaps partly 92.
owing to the urgent appeals of France.

Disraeli, ~~or~~ Lord Beaconsfield, ~~as he had now become~~, ~~had~~ ^{saw} seen in the first troubles in the East the opportunity for ~~the~~ ^{the} dashing foreign policy ~~which~~ he desired. He guessed that Russia would try to turn affairs to her own advantage. He could follow the brave old traditional policy, which, he believed, would obtain universal support in ^{Britain} ~~(the country)~~ for ~~the humiliation endured by Britain in 1870 had not been forgotten, and~~ it would be easy to stir up popular indignation by recalling Russia's treacherous denunciation of the Black Sea Treaty, and pointing out the danger of her acquiring Constantinople and threatening India. Speaking in the Guildhall in November 1875, he had given the 93.
first hint of his intentions. The [✓]government was "deeply conscious of the nature and magnitude of British interests, and those

Lyons. II. p. 96, Lyons to Derby, 14 January 1878.

British interests they are resolved to guard and maintain;" and the speech had been received with general approval. Bismarck perhaps noted it. At any rate he made secret overtures to Britain---just after the Andrassy Note had been sent---promising full support to her Eastern policy, and apparently asking nothing in return. ~~Derby~~ was suspicious, but Disraeli was flattered and inclined to accept. "You have to deal with a man who is dangerous, but who is sincere," he wrote to his colleague, "And who will act [^]straightforwardly with the English ministers, whose sense of honour he appreciates; a man, too, very sensitive and impulsive. The step he is now taking is one which, I believe, he has long and often meditated, but he was piqued by our doctrin-

94.

doctrinaire non-intervention and all that." Either Derby's policy carried the day, or Bismarck ~~discovered~~ that Disraeli needed no spurring on to take the lead in opposing Russia's plans, and prudently withdrew. The Premier was disappointed. "It appears to me that we are hardly taking [^]as much advantage as we might of Bismarck's original overture to us. Odo writes, [^]as if it were something that happened in a dream. We ought to have revived the feeling previous to the arrival of Gortschakov and the Austrian, so that Bismarck should take no step without apprising and consulting us." ~~60~~ (60)

95.

Disraeli to Derby: 18.2.76. 19.4.76. [^]Baconspeld ~~Bacon~~ Vol. VI pp. 21-22

The result of the Andrassy note was nothing more tangible than fair words from Turkey. Bulgaria joined in the revolt, and a revolution in Constantinople dethroned the Sultan and placed the Young Turk party in power. Hopes that they would pursue a more enlightened policy were disappointed, and in May the three Emperors drew up the Berlin Memorandum. France and Italy at once acceded to it; Britain refused, ^{ing} objection to a phrase which said it would be necessary to take "efficacious measures" to induce Turkey to consent to the reforms. (61.) France and Italy remonstrated with her, because they feared this would lead to a Turkish rejection of the Memorandum and a war, which neither of them wanted. Bismarck, however, was delighted, ^{for} He had been in a difficult ^{ies} position. Russia, when she found that Turkey was likely to resist, ~~(and might be supported by Britain and Austria)~~ had applied to Bismarck to know if he would support Russia in case of a quarrel with Austria over Eastern affairs. He had no intention ~~to wish to~~ ^{ing} support Russia, yet he realised the

Disraeli said he "was afraid of being drawn, step by step, into participation in a scheme which must end very soon in the disintegration of Turkey. Though we may not be able to resist the decision of the three Military Empires, he does not think we ought to sanction or approve the proposals." A Relief Commission for the distressed provinces would be "a system of indiscriminate almsgiving... utterly demoralising to any country". The concentration of Turkish troops in garrisons would "give the whole country to anarchy". Consular supervision of reforms "would reduce the authority of the Sultan to a nullity". Neither Britain nor any other power should on any account send ships to Constantinople to press for the acceptance of the reforms. The Cabinet was unanimous in refusing the Memorandum. (Disraeli to Queen Victoria, 28.5.76. Buckle VI. P. 248.)
 May Beaumont

(62.)
danger of an open quarrel with ^{her} Russia. He wanted ^{to} ~~his~~ revenge ^{himself},
~~on her~~, but not to drive ^{Russia} ~~her~~ into the arms of France. He
answered, in some distress, that he would be neutral in case of
a quarrel, but if necessary he would join either power to
prevent its losing its independence and influence in Europe. (63) (2)
This was practically a threat to Russia, that

(2) See Bülow's despatch of 26.11.76 to Schweinitz, attempting to sow ill-will between Russia and France, also Bismarck's to Schweinitz, 24. 1. 77. German F. O. II nos. 262, 273.
(2) He promised at the same time to do his best to reconcile England to Russia's advance + bribe her with Egypt. He could not contemplate a war with England in the interest of Russia. German F.O. II. no. 251.

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 if the worst came Germany would take part against her. At the same time ^{however,} he used his influence with Austria to make her come to some agreement with Russia, and secret negotiations between the two powers were opened. Russia, disappointed of German support, began to make friendly approaches to Britain, in the hope of coming to an understanding with her. The news that Britain meant to take the lead in opposing Russia was grateful to Bismarck; it meant that Russia would be ~~disappointed and frustrated~~ ^{checked}, but that someone else than Germany would do the dirty work.

The refusal of the Berlin Memorandum was the initial blunder of the British government. It encouraged Turkey to resistance, it put a stop to amicable understanding between the ~~(other)~~ powers and the possibility of collective action, it repelled the tentative advances for an agreement with Britain made by Russia, and drove her to individual action. Russia could not remain quiet. Only on one point was it possible to raise a public opinion in Russia, and that was the religious question. Already volunteers were pouring over the frontier into the Balkans, and the pressure on the government was increasing.

After the refusal of the Berlin Memorandum Serbia and Montenegro declared war on Turkey, and soon after Europe was horrified by the news that the Bulgarian revolt had been put down by Turkish troops ^{with unprecedented} ~~(in circumstances of unheard-of)~~ barbarity. A movement

(Gortschakov)

"Wir erwarteten grosse Dinge von Ihnen" sagte er, ("Warum?" writes Bismarck on the margin) "und Sie bringen nichts was wir nicht schon längst wussten". Russia had had 300,000 men in readiness in 1871. Was this her repayment? Schweinitz to Bismarck. 1. 11. 76. German F.O. II. 252

of public opinion in Europe, perhaps more widespread than had been seen before, culminated in a general demand for the adequate protection of the Christian populations of Turkey.

The Bulgarian Atrocities ruined Disraeli's hopes. His "spirited foreign policy" was robbed of all its splendour and gallantry. He could not pose as the defender of the weak against the strong---Russia had suddenly usurped that part. He ~~could~~ not stand forth as the patriotic defender of British interests in the East, but as the ally of the oppressor, the supporter of Islamism against Christianity. ~~He could not hope for~~ Popular *opinion would not allow him to oppose the* support in opposing Russia, and, was obliged to write to Elliot that all sympathy for Turkey had disappeared ~~(under the influence of the Bulgarian news)~~, and that even if Russia were to declare war "H.M. Government would find it practically impossible to interfere. Any such event would place England in a most unsatisfactory situation. Peace is urgently necessary," and Turkey ~~must~~ realise this. (65) X

In his first anger and disappointment Disraeli refused to believe the Bulgarian news, and ridiculed those who reported and credited it. This was perhaps natural; but even when assured of the truth by the ambassador at Constantinople, he deliberately suppressed the fact, and falsified the contents of the Elliot's

Derby to Elliot, 29.8.76. Bluebook. Disraeli had already been much annoyed by the spread of the war. He talked of the "infamous invasion" of Serbia, and hoped it would be "properly punished" by the Turks. (Disraeli to Chesterfield, 9.7.76. Buckle VI p. 37.)
July Beaconsfield

(66)

telegram, in the hope that the excitement would blow by. It was a tactical mistake; it prejudiced the very policy he was anxious to carry out, and allowed the leadership of opinion to slip for the moment into the hands of his political rival. Gladstone constituted himself the champion of the Bulgarians, and could not have found a subject that gave more scope to his eloquence and his powers of denunciation. The play was staged, but with the wrong hero.

Disraeli had chosen his policy because the traditional hostility to Russia led him to count on popular support. It was a policy congenial to himself, apart from his political views, because he, ^{as} a Jew, hated Russia, and ~~(a Jew, he)~~ had no special sympathy with the Christian populations of the East. This blow was a severe one, but he had still one great advantage, in that the majority of the Opposition would not follow Gladstone all the way. Hartington's followers were furious at the unfair way that Gladstone was treating their leader, and Harcourt and others were intriguing against him. They seized the Bulgarian incident as a weapon of attack against the Government, but they did not for a moment intend, ~~to follow,~~ if they obtained office,

In justice to Disraeli it must be admitted that though Elliot confirmed the Daily News articles, many of the British consuls adopted a pro-Turkish attitude and persistently belittled or discredited the reports of massacres or abuses. As a specimen of the stuff British officials sent home, we may quote Layard's later report that Dr Washburne (of Robert College) had told him, that a Bulgarian gentleman had told him, that three Turks in Kazanlike had died of broken hearts, due to remorse for having massacred Christians. ~~Turks were~~ naturally very humane but had lost their heads in a panic when the Christians rose and commenced a slaughter of the Mohammedans. (Layard to Derby, 12.5.78. Bluebook)

To follow Gladstone if he should support

Gladstone's ~~apparent~~ policy of supporting Russia. They did not want to displace the government, ^{at present}; they relied on a strong opposition in Parliament, the presence of the cautious Derby in the Cabinet, and their own secret relations with Russia through Schouvalov, to prevent all ~~strong~~ action in favour of Turkey, and that was all they cared for. This weakness on the part of the Opposition, and the slow development of the crisis, owing to Russia's unwillingness to act alone until she had exhausted every means of securing the support of the other powers, allowed Disraeli time to repair his position, and time for the old traditional hostility to Russia to recover the ascendancy over the temporary indignation against Turkey.

105.

For the time being the force of that indignation compelled the government to tack. There were traitors in the Cabinet itself. Not only was Derby, ^{usual}, as averse from every sort of action, ~~usual~~, but Salisbury and Carnarvon were both convinced of the decadence of the Turkish power, and anxious to secure the protection of the Christians. Salisbury, however, wished above all things that British policy should be bold and consistent: he preferred a friendly understanding with Russia, and possibly the partition of the Turkish Empire, but he had rather have an anti-Russian, pro-Turkish policy than one of inaction and indecision, a long waiting to see which way the cat would jump, ^{that} which would end by missing this chance of making British influence felt abroad. This weakened the opposition party in the cabinet, for Salisbury and Derby could only at times work together, since ~~their~~

106.

Schouvalov obtained secret information about the views of the Cabinet from Lady Derby, and communicated it to Harcourt. Harcourt I. p. 311.

motives and objects were contradictory, and the more energetic character of the younger man (~~gradually~~ and) inevitably drove him 107. to sympathise rather with the fiery and enterprising Prime Minister than with the slow and timid Secretary.

"If it had not been for these unhappy 'atrocities'," wrote Beaconsfield, "we should have settled a peace very honourable and England and satisfactory to Europe. Now, we are obliged to work from a new point of departure, and dictate to Turkey, who has forfeited all sympathy."

On October 4th the Cabinet met and decided on a policy of opposition to both parties. Beaconsfield had considered for a moment the policy of a general partition of Turkey, with the British lion dividing the spoils, but he believed that Gladstone's violence was already producing a reaction, and that with patience he would be able to carry out his first intentions. It was ^{suggestion of} He therefore decided to refuse Russia's offers collective action to induce Turkey to consent to an amistice, while at the same time 108. Elliot was instructed to press Turkey to grant one, and if Turkey refused, and Russia marched into Bulgaria, Britain would then occupy Constantinople. "F.O.," says a suggestive note, "Exceedingly recalcitrant."

None of these resolutions were carried out, save the refusal to Russia; whether it was that Derby continued obdurate, or Beaconsfield succeeded in dropping those that he liked least. Austria and Russia together than proposed that Britain and

France should make a joint naval demonstration to induce Turkey to grant an armistice, and this also was refused. Turkey had replied to Russia that she would not grant an armistice for less than six months; this would be disastrous to Serbia^x, who could not keep her army so long in the field. Beaconsfield declared that it would be quite satisfactory, and that he could take no steps to press Turkey to consent to a shorter period. It would indeed have satisfied him, for by that time, as he said, "the people of England will have quite recovered their senses, and Gladstone will be shut up." (70) 109.

(As Britain's refusal ended all chance of joint action,) Russia^{then} acted alone, presented an ultimatum to Turkey, and at once obtained the ^{short} armistice (limited to one month) for which the powers had pressed in vain for months. 110.

The Bulgarian agitation was already cooling down, and the Russian^x success began to re-awaken jealousy in England. Disraeli ^{ventured} ~~dared~~ to make a speech in which he indirectly threatened war against Russia "in a righteous cause." He was in the meantime working to secure a congress, and continued to ^{forever} ~~repel the~~ friendly offers which Schouvalov conveyed from his government, for he was convinced that Russia was playing double. He hoped to obtain German support for the Congress, and as both that country and France wished to avoid war, he obtained it. The Conference met at Constantinople, in December 1876, and Salisbury represented Great Britain. 111.

~~He outlined what he believed to be British policy to Derby~~

He aimed at some sort of compromise.

before he left. There was, he said "a minimum of security to the Christians, which no desire for Turkish welfare will induce you to forego, and...a maximum of interference with his" (the Sultan) "independence which no desire to maintain peace between Russia and him will persuade you to exceed." (Though late.) It was not yet too late to make terms with Russia: but Turkey had been encouraged by British's conduct, and Salisbury's policy was not supported by the home government.

He visited Berlin, Paris, Vienna, and Rome, on his way to the East, and attempted to fathom the ~~mysterious~~ intentions of Bismarck. The Chancellor declared that he would give no help in the useless task of bolstering up Turkey, but neither would he support Russia. Partition, he hinted, was the solution, and he urged that Britain should take Egypt, or occupy Constantinople.

As far as can be judged, from ^{Beaconsfield's} ~~Bismarck's~~ correspondence, he never even contemplated the success of the Conference. He was convinced that Russia meant to have Constantinople at all costs, and events at home were encouraging him to resume his old policy, for though Gladstone still maintained his hold on Scotland, London and the south were rapidly coming round to a point of view. ~~hostile to Russia~~ ^{Beaconsfield's} He was determined "not to coerce the Porte or to sanction coercion by others," and to evade the wishes of Russia, which were "always to induce England to join in coercion of the Porte." (72)

The Conference sat through December and January, and the

Salisbury II. / Buckle VI. II Salisbury to Derby 3 Nov. 1876, Salisbury II, p. 90.
Beaconsfield VI, p. ?

Russian and British delegates soon came to an understanding. Russia was ready to make concessions, for Schouvalov's influence was dominant at St Petersburg just now, and he was working hard for peace. The work of the Conference, however, was continually undermined by the British ambassador.

38 Neither Beaconsfield nor Derby had any intention of supporting Salisbury's policy, Beaconsfield because he did not want to do anything against Turkey, and Derby because he did not want to do anything at all. Beaconsfield believed that Russia was playing double, and that Salisbury was "duped by Ig," as he denominated General Ignatiev, the Russian delegate. "He seems most prejudiced," the Prime Minister wrote, "And not to be aware that his principal object in being sent to Const (sic) is to keep the Russians out of Turkey, not to create an ideal existence for Turkish Christians." 73)

73) Beaconsfield, VI, p. 111.

Turkey refused absolutely every point submitted to her by the Conference. ^{(74) (11)} While Salisbury urged that some means should be taken to show that Britain did not approve of her conduct, the home government was giving her every encouragement. Elliot, the ambassador, secretly allowed the Turks to understand that Salisbury's views were not to be taken seriously, and Beaconsfield and Derby gave repeated public assurances that, though Britain would give Turkey no aid or ^x protection in case of war, she would not

(2) These included: Small territorial cessions to Serbia and Montenegro: European Commission of Supervision for Reforms: Foreign Gendarmerie (Belgian) to assist in pacification of Bulgaria: Cantonment of Turkish troops in forts and chief towns: New mode of nominating Valis: New administrative division of provinces: Judicial Reforms: Financial Reforms: Encouragement of Circassians to emigrate to Asia. ^{(75) x} Salisbury II, pp. 117-9. Cp. Ignatiev's statement to Forster, that "The Constantinople Turkophiles told the Porte, that 'no matter what Lord Salisbury says, three or four months after the war begins England must help you'. (Forster II. p. 117.) See also the German F.O. papers 'letzten (Elliot) mache, so wird in einem an den Vicomte d'Harcourt gerichteten Privatbrief erzählt, aus seiner Ansicht kein Hehl, spottete über die fruchtlosen Anstrengungen der Konferenz und unterstützte die Türken in ihrem Widerstande". Hohenlohe to Bismarck, 6. 2. 77, no. 269, etc. etc. Jan.

consent to coercive measures, and these assurances were given in a ~~(most)~~ sympathetic and courteous tone. The Turks were given to understand that Britain dreaded a Russo-Turkish War more than anything, and had come to the Conference solely to prevent one, and they naturally concluded that ~~if this fear was so extreme it~~ ^{must be} ~~was~~ due to a belief that British interests would be endangered by a Russian success, and that if war was actually to begin, Britain would sooner or later intervene to save Turkey. On January 13th Beaconsfield told Odian Effendi, the Turkish special envoy, ^{that} no one wished more than he that Turkey should "maintain her place in the European system," but that she needed peace to put her affairs in order. In a war with Russia she would be beaten. If she accepted the reforms she would gain several years' respite, and ~~so~~ would regain the sympathies of England, "alienated by recent deplorable events." No clearer hint that Turkey need only gain a little time to be sure of British support and sympathy ^{was} needed. ~~to be given.~~ The Turks ~~took the hint.~~ ^{set up a} They made a great to-do about their brand-new constitution and parliament, ^{which} only lasted as long as ^{they were} ~~it was~~ required to ^{and} ~~diddle~~ British diplomats, which, they said, was a proof that they intended to enter upon a career of reform spontaneously, though they would not have it forced upon them by outsiders.

Salisbury at last was driven to beg that Elliot should be withdrawn. Germany, Italy, and Austria, had all earnestly urged him to procure this. Unfortunately Schouvalov made the same request on the same day, and the government took this as an excuse

to refuse---it would ruin them with the electorate if it leaked out that they had removed a British ambassador to please Russia.

As ^{the} Turkey continued to refuse every concession, the Conference ~~had to break up~~ ^{broke}, and the ambassadors of all the powers were withdrawn as a protest. Salisbury saw a troubled future, but Beaconsfield was ^{not} alarmed. In spite of all argument, he was convinced that Russia was only bluffing, ~~(was frightened)~~ and would give in. Russia still showed great anxiety to preserve the European concert, such as it was; ~~and this convinced him that he was right.~~ Gortschakov had signed a preliminary agreement with Austria as to a Russo-Turkish war, but the final agreement was not reached till March, when all ~~Russia's~~ efforts for a peaceful solution had failed. On January 19th Gortschakov issued a circular ~~inquiring~~ ^{asking} what course the powers would follow if the Conference failed? ~~Exactly~~ ⁷⁷ A month later, having received no reply, he instructed Schouvalov to tell the ^{British} ~~British~~ government that if the other powers would not act, Russia must act alone, and she would take the tone of the answer as ^{an} indication. ^{She would be satisfied if} The powers ^{would merely} ~~need only~~ say that they still maintained their requirements as to reforms for the Christians, and that their unanimous wish must be respected, ~~and Russia would be satisfied.~~ ^{120.} Two days later she asked for an answer, as she could not keep her army mobilised much longer, and suggested a new compromise: a year should be given to Turkey to reform, and if at the end of this time the report was not satisfactory, Turkey should submit to a European

The powers reserved their answer till they saw how the new Turkish parliament worked.

Commission; Britain need not say she will join in coercion, but need only "not imply that Russia was to be left to herself to secure" reforms for the Christians. These attempts at compromise were only taken by the government to mean that Russia was showing the white feather. "It is understood by H. M. Government," wrote Derby to Loftus, "That the object of the Russian Government is to secure an honourable^x retreat from their present position." (78)

Still receiving no answer, Russia, on March 13th, proposed a Protocol, to be signed by the powers and presented to Turkey. It was to suggest that the Porte should enumerate the reforms it proposed to carry out, the powers should determine if they were satisfactory, ~~and~~ observe their progress through their diplomatic representatives, and, if disappointed, ~~to~~ consider common measures for enforcing them. As a special concession to Britain, Russia promised to enter upon disarmament negotiations with Turkey as soon as she accepted this.

Great Britain consented to sign, with the stipulation that if disarmament were not obtained, the protocol should be null and void. It was signed on March 31st, and, together with the declaration, sent for Turkish approval. On April 4th, Britain dissociated herself from the other powers by sending Sir A.H. Layard as ambassador to Constantinople. The Turkish government replied that "the Sultan is very sensible of this delicate mark✓"

31.3.77. Bluebook. Derby to Loftus, 21 Feb. 1879. Bluebook.

129. [of attention...the more so as His Imperial Majesty knew by reputation the eminent qualities of Mr Layard, and his sentiments of friendship for our country." Immediately afterwards, they refused the protocol. Russia at once declared war, and her troops entered Bulgaria. She had concluded her arrangements with Austria. The latter promised to be neutral, receiving in return leave to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a promise that Russia would not try to create a great new Slavonic state in the Balkans.

Bismarck was well satisfied. There was no danger of a war between Russia and Austria. Britain, he hoped, would intervene to prevent Russia from being too successful. He himself could prevent the war from spreading further, and so becoming dangerous to Germany, for, as the only power without ambitions or interests in the East, he held the balance between the rivals.

The story of the Constantinople Conference casts an interesting light on the relations between the two leaders of the British ministry. Salisbury had shown that, alone, he was capable of a generous and unprejudiced policy. Once returned to London, he fell again under the influence of his chief, and weakly abandoned the line he had taken.

Beaconsfield believed that now he had only to wait. He had

79) Safvet Pasha to Musurus Pasha, 5 April 1877. Bluebook.

the full support of the Queen. The Opposition, except for Argyll, had deserted Gladstone, disgusted by the violence of his procedure, and Hartington, Granville, Forster, and Dilke were perhaps more in sympathy with the Prime Minister's views than with those of their own leader. Salisbury, who was puzzled by the attitude of his chief, made a feeble attempt to carry his own plans. He proposed that the old policy should be abandoned, and that Britain should take the initiative in the partition of the Turkish Empire. The proposal was rejected by the Cabinet with horror, Beaconsfield calling it "immoral." Resignation might have been the best course for the Marquis, but few of us have the courage to jump overboard twice, and he preferred to remain in office, using his influence to restrain action/

80) Dilke and Harcourt were in favour of applying coercion to Turkey, but they were strongly anti-Russian.

too favourable to Turkey, for which he made use of Derby's aversion to action of any sort. "We may prevent evil," he wrote with his customary pessimism, "but we can do no more. The result will be an emasculate, purposeless vacillation, which will be very discreditable." (81)

It was the strength of the Cabinet opposition that most distressed the Prime Minister. "In three months time British interests will be in the mud," he wrote bitterly to Derby. All efforts to win over the Foreign Secretary to his side failed. Derby "sat like a bump on a log," immovable alike by flattery, reproaches, and exhortation. Disraeli would gladly have forced him and Salisbury to resign, but he could not count on enough support from the rest of the Cabinet to venture this. (82) He was eager for an energetic policy. He wanted to occupy Constantinople, and to threaten Bismarck until he consented to support ~~this venture~~. He ~~then~~ suggested that Turkey should be asked to adhere to certain terms of peace, on the understanding that, if Russia rejected them, Britain would go to war on Turkey's side. Secretly, unknown to anyone but the Queen and ~~the~~ ^{his} secretary, Montagu Corry, he told Russia that while Britain would welcome an honourable peace this year, she would become a belligerent if the war were extended to a second campaign. The whole

127.

128.

Salisbury II. p. 141-146. It should perhaps be stated, as possible explanation of Salisbury's conduct, that he believed that the Constantinople Conference had failed owing to underhand dealings of Germany, and believed that if any dangers threatened Britain they came from Germany. See letters, 16.2.77, 2.3.77. "We may be fighting for Holland before two years are over," etc. (83) ^{his} Buckle, VI, 22 May 1877. p. 140 (83) Ib. p. 152. (84) He was impatient because Odo Russell did not care to undertake this task, and wrote "Lord Odo and Lord Lyons...are both absolutely cowed by Prince Bismarck." Beaumont VI p. 188.

Cabinet was ready to fight if Russia seized Constantinople, but the malcontents believed that this could be prevented by a friendly appeal to Russia.

As the ~~months~~ ^{Beaconsfield's} passed, the prospect brightened. ~~From Beaconsfield's point of view,~~ The first good sign was that the news from the East was beginning to ^a effect public opinion. Layard was singing the praises of the Turkish Parliament, its "complete independence and vigorous freedom of speech," and British consuls were sending in reports of Russian outrages on Mohammedan peasants. The fall of Plevna, and the advance of the Russian troops both in Europe and Asia, roused a panic. ~~in England,~~ It was suddenly revealed that England was not, after all, immune from war fever. Excitement rose to such a pitch, that, if the thing had happened in Paris, it would have been called by the ~~island~~ press a final example of "French levity and lust for conquest." ~~Nothing could have been more satisfactory for Beaconsfield.~~ 129.

Besides this, the Prime Minister began to see that he might ^{130.} be more successful in seducing Salisbury than Derby. In December there was a last struggle. The defeated Turks appealed for mediation, and Beaconsfield proposed to summon parliament, demand a note of credit, and at the same moment offer mediation. Derby threatened resignation, and Salisbury supported him. The Prime Minister seems to have realised now that he could win Salisbury ^{only making} by ~~certain~~ concessions, ~~but not without~~. For the next few weeks negotiations went on between ~~The Prime Minister and the Secretary for India.~~ ^{the two.} The news from the East helped Salisbury to decide. With the success of the Russian armies, the war party in

Petersburg had got the upper hand. Russia showed herself impertinent and resolute, refused mediation, and entered alone upon peace negotiations, whose secrecy caused general alarm. Apparently in return for a promise that reform in Turkey would not be neglected, Salisbury undertook to support Beaconsfield's ^{policy} ~~in taking~~ action against Russia, and from this time on these two were allied ~~together~~ against the passive resistance of Derby. 131.

In February the Russian armies advanced, occupied Chatal-dja, and cut the telegraph wires to Europe. The British fleet was ordered to Constantinople. Beaconsfield had so far succeeded that the country was offered the choice between a strong anti-Russian policy, and a feeble and cowardly acquiescence in the extreme demands formulated by the war party at the Russian court. Russia was elated by success, ~~determined to have her revenge for the sullen opposition of Britain in the last two years~~ and threw prudence and honour to the winds. The secret treaty with Austria was abandoned, and the peace terms signed at San Stefano created an enormous autonomous Bulgaria, with ports on the Black and Aegean Seas, and including Greeks, Serbs, and other Balkan races among its subjects; it was to be occupied for two years by Russian troops, and a Russian commission was to draw up its constitution. Serbia and Montenegro were left in the lurch, and inoffensive Roumania was to cede Bessarabia to Russia, in exchange for the Dobrudja, which she did not want. Large territorial cessions were made by Turkey in Asia, and an indemnity that would cripple her for many years was imposed. Russia was made the special protector of the Turkish Christians. Several of these stipulations 132.

were contrary to the secret treaty with Austria, and that state, ^{(86) HIT} scared and indignant, was ready to give some support to Britain. ^{apparently, (2) (86)} So far as can be ascertained, ^{So,} was Bismarck.

Co-operation with Russia in defence of the Christians was of course no longer possible; chance after chance had been thrown away, and Salisbury believed that, unless Britain was to sink back into the disgraceful lassitude of 1870, he must adopt the Prime Minister's policy. The terms arranged have been described. Derby still proved obstinate; and after some weeks, while ~~the business of the Foreign Office~~ was transacted over his head by Beaconsfield and Salisbury, he finally resigned on a proposal to call up the reserves, to bring Indian troops to the Mediterranean, and to acquire a strong port in that sea as a counterpoise to Russia's gains. Disunion in the Cabinet was thus at an end, and a resolute policy was at once adopted, ^{with almost startling suddenness.} ~~the change of tone being somewhat startling to continental opinion.~~

(11) Austria can see only two alternatives, "Konflikt mit Russland oder Konferenz". Andrassy to Karolyi (Berlin) 28. ^{Jan.} 78. German F.O. no. 303 (II). ^{Feb.} See despatch to Schweinitz l. 2. 78, German F.O. no. 307. England means war. Gortschakov knows best himself what he is doing, but Schweinitz must tell him this.

Britain and Austria demanded a voice in the peace terms. Russia was willing to go to a ^{conference} ~~congress~~, but she would not consent to submit all the articles of the Treaty of San Stefano to discussion, and Britain insisted on this. Austria gave but lukewarm support: she was afraid of being left in the lurch by her new friends, and could not decide which course was the most dangerous. Possibly Bismarck shared her doubts of the reality of the British threats, and was secretly advising an accommodation with Russia. The resignation of Derby changed all this. He was known

Cf. Münster to Bulow, 29. ^{March} 78, No. 375, "Lord Beaconsfield... die Verantwortung für den Krieg, trotz aller Reden von spirited policy, nicht gern übernehmen möchte." 2. April 78, No. 378 He will throw the responsibility on the F.O. Derby would not do it. Salisbury will if he can't do anything else. He is one of the very few English statesmen who will be ready to share the booty with ~~England~~. England has no object in this war but "prestige".
Russia

to be the leader of the peace party, and his removal, the
 summoning of the Indian troops, and the determined tone of the
 new foreign secretary, convinced Europe that Britain was now in
 earnest. Russia consented to a congress without limitations.
 Salisbury appealed to Bismarck, who had already declared his
 readiness to act as "honest broker." The Chancellor said he
 would support Britain so long as he was not led into anything
 that would give offence to Russia, and he advised a preliminary
 arrangement with that power. Schouvalov on his part also appeal-
 ed to Berlin for support, but could get no promise; and, accept-
 ing this, he began to urge concessions to Britain, for he believed
 a war would be disastrous for Russia. A preliminary arrangement
 was accordingly signed, by which the chief causes of dispute
 between the two powers were roughly settled, and the peace terms
 outlined.

Bismarck was elected President of the Congress. In after
 days Schouvalov used to entertain select parties in European
 drawingrooms with a mimicry of the tremendous Chancellor
 striding up and down the room, storming, "Settle, gentlemen,
 settle, I beg!... Tomorrow I go to Kissingen!" Owing to this

"Parzin!" - Owing to this strenuous course the Congress finished its labours in record time.

Britain and Russia had each sent ~~out~~ two plenipotentiaries, and in each case the younger was the ruling spirit, though the elder bore the great name. Schouvalov forced his views on the ancient and unwilling Gortschakov, and though Beaconsfield was happy in the thought that he was dictating terms to listening Europe, the worn-out old man, incapacitated by gout, deaf, half blind, and speaking only imperfect French, was ~~very~~ much less important than the public and himself imagined. He was spirited enough and ready to carry things with a high hand, but in matters of detail the settlement was usually arranged by Salisbury, and when Beaconsfield intervened the result was often disastrous: in the general character of the treaty, the large concessions made to Russia and the attention paid to the claims of

"What with deafness, ignorance of French, and Bismarck's extraordinary mode of speech, Beaconsfield has the dimmest idea of what is going on---understands everything crossways---and imagines a perpetual conspiracy". (Salisbury to his wife, 23.6.78. June 1878. Vol. II. P. 287.

Münster to Bismarck, 10.6.78. "Eure Durchlaucht werden finden dass es sehr schwer ist mit dem sehr eitlen, dabei doch schon sehr alter schwacher Mann ein wirklich ernster Gespräch zu führen. Dabei kommen aber allerdings oft einige lichtvolle and geistreiche Gedanken zutage, es fehlt aber dem Geist die höhere Auffassung, der sittliche Halt." Salisbury has learnt a great deal at the Constantinople Conference. He will certainly be P.M. and guiding personality in England soon.

the Christian populations, the influence of Salisbury was dominant. Beaconsfield would have preferred the revolted Balkan provinces to obtain no advantages; only a deference to public opinion induced him to take any interest in the Christians, and only the fact that he had obtained Cyprus consoled him for the large gains that Russia was making.

In the final settlement, Russia kept all her conquests in Asia, except Bayazid and the Alashkerd valley, which left the

"I am personally somewhat anxious---because neither the agreements we have entered into, nor the pledges we have made as to the Christian races have impressed themselves very deeply on the Chief's mind: and in those matters I have to act as a 'flapper'". (Salisbury to Lady S., 15.8.1878. ~~File~~ ^{File} II. p. 281
 Jme Salisbury.

trade routes to Persia in Turkish control. In Europe Russia ¹⁴⁰ was allowed to take Bessarabia from the reluctant Roumania, in whom no one took any interest. Bulgaria, however, was removed from Russian control. The Russian occupation was limited to nine months instead of two years, and Bulgaria was divided into two parts, the most southerly remaining under the rule ~~of~~ the Sultan, while the non-Bulgarian districts at first **included** in her boundaries were distributed among the other Balkan states.

Austria coyly accepted Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Britain occupied Cyprus, which was to be used as a means of supervising the reforms promised by Turkey.

France was bribed to consent to the British acquisition by ¹⁴¹ the promise of a free hand in Tunis.

Italy got nothing, for though Bismarck hinted that she should have Tunis, he hinted the same to France, and Italy knew it and was **furious**. The representatives of the other powers ~~deparated~~ very well pleased, with the exception of Gortschakov, who saw himself shelved. He had indulged his passion for congresses once too often.

III.

611
Chap. VII Section III
Loyd

In the course of British policy from 1876 to 1878, almost the whole of the advantage gained in 1875 was thrown away.

The establishment of a counterbalancing power to resist the overweening ambitions of Germany was postponed for thirty¹⁴² years. All possibility of a reconciliation with Russia was nipped in the bud, and on both sides fresh enmity was awakened.

^{usually}
The accusations ~~commonly~~ brought against the Treaty of Berlin itself are scarcely just. At the time the friends of Turkey declared that so many concessions had been made to Russia that she had gained practically all she wanted, while Turkey had been betrayed for the sake of Cyprus. Others, then and since, accused the treaty-makers of abandoning the Christians to the revenge of Turkey. The truth was quite the contrary. Russia had gained some territory in Asia, but her influence at Constantinople¹⁴³ was destroyed, and was never regained. In Europe she had gained nothing but the cession of Bessarabia, for the attempt to establish her influence over Bulgaria failed, and within a few years the divided halves of that country were united under a German prince. The second accusation was equally false, for the Treaty of Berlin repeated practically all the assurances regarding reforms embodied in the Treaty of San Stefano, only if placed them under the surveillance of the powers in general, instead of under that of Russia alone. Salisbury evidently intended that Britain should play the part Russia had intended for¹⁴⁴

herself: the establishment of the British military consuls in Turkey was the earnest of the work that he meant to do. It was the Liberal government who, as soon as they entered office, abandoned all pretence of protecting the Christians. The military consuls were removed by Gladstone on a frivolous pretext, and it appeared that the Liberal championship of the Christians when out of office had been no more than a move in party warfare. The Conservatives, when they returned to power, despairingly accepted the situation, and for this, not for their policy in 1878, must equally share the blame of the betrayal of the Turkish Christians, and the horrors which subsequently ensued.

A far more serious accusation against the Treaty of Berlin is that its most important results were those that were never contemplated by the British treaty-makers.

Russia having been cast out, Constantinople was swept and garnished only that German influence might enter instead. In the interests of humanity, the change was not for the better. The motives of Russia might be selfish and hypocritical, but at least she made some attempt to better the conditions of the Turkish Christians; but Bismarck and his successors cared nothing for "ces gens là-bas." The only policy of Germany was to exploit the economic resources of Turkey in her own interest, and to organise the military force of Turkey with a view to possible uses in the future. It may be regarded as certain that in ousting

(90) It is possible that the advice of Bismarck influenced the Liberals in this step. See G.F.O. IV, ch. i.

the object of Beaconsfield and Salisbury was to leave British influence supreme, not to make room for a third power. 613

Thirty years before, Cobden had remarked that even if Russia should obtain control of Constantinople itself, it would not be dangerous to Britain. The problem of assimilating a new and probably turbulent dominion to her already vast and unwieldy empire would so absorb her energies that she would not only be disinclined to, but would be incapable of, further aggression for a long period. In fine, he held that such an acquisition would be a source of weakness rather than strength to Russia as a military power. It would be better, he argued, that these rich territories should be in the hands of a Christian power, backward, perhaps, but at least more capable of improvement, than a barbarous and decadent Mohammedan state. We had opposed the advance of Russia in the Near East and the Far East, in Europe and in Asia; but she must be allowed to satiate her appetite

where. Schweinitz, the German diplomat, stated the case more forcibly to Morier. "Every ship (Russia) builds and launches in the Mediterranean," he said, "is a hostage given to you for her good behaviour in the East... If a dog and a fish have a quarrel to settle, the fish must pray God that the dog should come into the water." 611

Germany, however, had entered on a course by which she hoped to obtain the advantages desired by Russia, without any of the counter-acting disadvantages. She made no attempt to force an alien rule on Turkey. Peaceful penetration was the method adopted, and Germany was careful to avoid offending the Porte by interference and demands for reform, as Russia and Britain had done, but allowed Turkish misgovernment to go on unchecked. 149

Apart from the arguments of Cobden and Schweinitz, it seems probable if the policy adopted by Great Britain

was the best method of opposing the advance of Russia. It has been shown that its actual effect was almost to force Russia into declaring war on Turkey: but it had another weakness. ~~It~~ 150.

The whole British policy in the Near East was based on the idea

that the liberated Balkan peoples would be subservient to Russia and that the Pan-Slavonic ideal had ^{they were} as much influence in these provinces as in the Russian court. ~~It was, of course, of the~~ ^{right in wishing} highest importance that these stirring peasant states should be allowed to develop free from the deadening influence of Russian absolutism; and the government was right in wishing that they should not fall under Russian control: but ~~to~~ subject them in- definitely to the rule of Turkey was a yet more evil alternative.

None of the British statesmen made ^{any} the slightest effort to find out what were the real conditions in the Balkan states. They 151. took it as an unquestionable fact that these peoples would be quietly absorbed by Russia. What evidence was there for this? So far, the only sign shown by Serbia and Montenegro of devotion to Russia was to make what they could out of her. Greece detested Russia. It was speedily shown that Bulgaria was equally hostile, ~~to her~~. The case of Poland might have ^{proved} shown them that Pan-slavism was not always alluring to Slavonic races. If they feared Pan-slavism in the Balkans, it would have been natural to make

use of Roumania as a counterweight, but, as has been seen, they were absolutely indifferent to ^{the} ~~the~~ fate of Roumania, and their correspondence seems to indicate that they believed Roumania to be a Slavonic country. 152.

The possibility of using these thriving little states as a barrier to the southward advance of Russia never seems to have occurred to any British statesman. ^{(92) @ Britain} They had in the past persistently ^{there} opposed every attempt at progress on their part, apparently not realising that the stronger these states were the more likely they were to be independent of Russia. Now the opportunity of making Britain the friend and protector of the Balkan countries, and of opposing Russia's advance without adopting the immoral and reactionary course of supporting Turkey, was lost through pure ignorance. 153.

On these points the Conservative government showed themselves fully as much the slaves of an idea as their predecessors. Salisbury, it has been seen, had tried to break away to a more independent policy, ~~as regards Russia~~, but he had not sufficient force of character to carry it out, and in Balkan politics he was as ignorant, as much hindered by old beliefs and theories, as any of his colleagues. Beaconsfield, on the other hand, seems rather to have taken advantage of this idealism than to have been deluded by it.

"Austria did not mean to fight for Bessarabia. This was a matter of secondary interest to us.... The Montenegrin and Serbian question does not interest us in the least." (Salisbury to Elliot, 3.4.78. Salisbury II, p. 61.)

June

Germany was far more alive than Britain to the importance of the Balkan states. Bismarck lost no opportunity to establish German influence there. He had set up a German prince in Roumania, and the result there had been disappointing, on the whole, owing to the obstinately Latin sympathies of the population. He made a second attempt, in the years following 1878, in Bulgaria, which was attended with much greater success. The Treaty of Berlin, therefore, marks, much more definitely than 1866, the entrance of Germany into Balkan politics also.

154.

Another result, equally unexpected by Beaconsfield and Salisbury, was the renewal of the Russo-German alliance, albeit on less intimate terms. They did not realise that, whatever their policy, they could not succeed in permanently isolating Russia. Russia was bound to seek an understanding, if not with the Western Powers, then with Germany. British policy had enabled Bismarck to frighten Russia and punish her for her conduct in 1875. He had shown her clearly that France could not, and Britain would not, support her, and that her choice was therefore the German Alliance, or a splendid but dangerous isolation. He was successful; the Russo-German alliance was renewed, and was preserved until Bismarck and his ^{successors} deliberately broke it. Of the extent and significance of the Russian alliance, however, in its various forms between 1863 and 1891, British statesmen never seem to have been quite aware. Their policy to Russia, from this point of view, is always like that of men half asleep.

The better understanding with France, which had existed since the War Scare, and which affairs in Egypt had not yet destroyed, was likewise sacrificed, though Salisbury had made some attempt to preserve it. He had induced France to accept the ^{156.} ~~British~~ occupation of Cyprus by promising a free hand in Tunis. Two years later France found herself able to take advantage of this offer. She was partly impelled to do so by a wish to obtain compensation for the events which had occurred in Egypt. By this time the Liberals were in power, and their indignation and disgust were extreme. In reply to their angry remonstrances France informed them of Salisbury's offer, and Salisbury publicly ~~denied~~ that he had ever made the agreement. His denials did not convince the Liberal

statesmen, and he was obliged to enlist the services of Lord Lyons ^{157.} to prevent the French government from justifying themselves by publishing the papers bearing on the subject. Granville was still eager to organise a European opposition to France, but his colleagues felt that Salisbury's action had tied their hands. Dilke and Hartington, instead, induced Granville "to try to get compensation in Egypt for ourselves," forgetting that Tunis had been offered as compensation for Cyprus. The news of Granville's schemes

* "On May 6th Lord Granville, against Tenterden's opinion and my own, sketched drafts to Germany and Austria as to the position of the French in Tunis, with a view to raise the concert of Europe in their path." Dilke's diary, Dilke ⁹⁴ p 380. ⁹³ lb. p.450.

7/4

meantime reached France, whose ambassador bitterly complained of treachery, and Dilke assured him that the report was false. The whole incident, the grotesque jealousy of Granville, the hypocritical insincerity of Dilke, and the treacherous conduct of Salisbury, was sufficiently discreditable.

152.

The incident, however, was only the first of many. It might have been just possible to induce France to forgive the British occupation of Egypt by a generous policy regarding Tunis, but instead, the British government took every opportunity of nagging at France about the question, and did not scruple to take up, without believing in them, the claims of the disreputable M. Levy as a weapon of offence. The French government, passionately irritated, allowed themselves to be drawn into Bismarck's net, and entered upon a policy of colonial expansion and opposition to Britain, under his guidance. The two Western Powers were soon involved in petty and undignified colonial squabbles in every part of the world, and the breach between them grew ever wider, as Bismarck egged on, promising support now to one, now to the other - one and the other, playing the part by which Patrick Duffy won the earldom of Fife. In this way the friendship of France was sacrificed for a few scraps of colonies, as the friendship of Russia had been sacrificed for Cyprus.

159.

tautology

160.

For, in the end, that was the only gain Britain reaped from the Treaty of Berlin. Even that gain in itself could hardly be balanced against the loss of moral prestige which its accept-

(95) See his own account, Dilke, Chap. 24.

(96) Lyons, II p. 238 ff.

ance involved. It could hardly appear ~~in any other~~ ^{wise} light than as a final proof of the hypocrisy of Britain's attitude of moral superiority. ~~And neither party was free from the taint. Gladstone had inveighed against the acquisition when in opposition, but as his protests ceased as soon as he came into office, it was not necessary for foreigners to attach much importance to them.~~ For this doubtful gain Russia and Turkey had been alienated, Britain herself almost completely isolated, and the possibility a some sort of re-establishment of the Balance of Power sacrificed.

It has been seen that the Conservative policy at this period showed ~~a distinct tendency towards~~ the abandonment of tradition and principle. The current ideas about non-intervention, and peace had been disregarded, and Britain had displayed ¹⁶¹ an energy and resolution that had increased her reputation greatly. ¹⁹ This new prestige, indeed, was a much more important gain than Cyprus, and to some extent compensated for her moral losses. But otherwise, as we have seen, this new energy had led to no British ^{gain} profits, and produced results that were not only unexpected, But generally unfortunate for Britain.

It had, in fact, only been possible to sacrifice these principles because another tradition had for the moment taken their place---the tradition that any advance of Russia must be opposed as a threat to British interests. The influence of this idea roused ¹⁶² press and people from their customary indifference to foreign affairs, and ~~made it possible for them~~ allowed the

Prime Minister to carry out triumphantly a policy which was largely one of personal ambition and personal prejudice.

Hence it was that the departure from principles was more ~~apparent than real~~ ~~involved no readjustment of tradition~~ ~~in the light of recent events~~ ~~no readjustment of ideas to facts~~ ~~no profit by experience~~. It involved no ^{reconsideration} ~~readjustment~~ of tradition ~~to~~ in the light of recent ~~events~~, no readjustment of ideas to facts, no profit by experience. ~~The~~ British policy had not, even now, come to grips with reality. For this reason the Treaty of Berlin had results so far-reaching and so little contemplated by the British plenipotentiaries, ^{and} ~~for this reason~~ these plenipotentiaries were little more than ~~puppets~~ in the grasp of Bismarck. For this reason it was that the power which gained most by the Treaty of Berlin was neither Britain nor Russia, but Germany. 163

Throughout the period whose history had been here reviewed, 164 whenever the influence of Great Britain declined, it was due to her own deliberate inaction. It was never caused by any essential material weakness, but by the timidity, vacillation, or indifference of the government. Britain was flouted by foreign states because it was believed that she preferred to devote herself to economic matters, and that she would sacrifice any political interest to commercial security and success. Whenever, therefore, she chose to abandon her lassitude, and display ^{or} energy and determination---even so misdirected as it had lately been---worthy of her real position, she began at once, almost automatically,

to recover the prestige she had lost. This curious phenomenon was due to her immense material wealth and resources.

The developement of the new Germany struck at the root of this power of recovery, this ability, whenever need pressed, to regain lost reputation by "rousing herself as if from sleep, and shaking her invincible locks." No other country could have done this to the same extent, because only in Germany could be found the peculiar combination of political and economic power, directed and organised by an intelligence so ruthless and so far-seeing, which threatened the position of Great Britain in Europe and in the world. ✓

16550 words.

I.

144 It was a common characteristic of the Victorian idealist to attribute to the principle that was his particular fetish the most various and universal results, and to ignore the complicated and numberless causes that ~~combine~~ to produce any given condition. The great prosperity of ~~England and Scotland~~ (~~Ireland cannot be included~~) in the middle part of the reign of Victoria was attributed entirely to the Free Trade policy that her government had introduced, and other contributory causes were overlooked.

In reality Free Trade was as much the result as the cause of British prosperity. Great Britain, owing to her happy situation ^{while} during the ~~great~~ war ~~that~~ devastated the continent, and to the fact that many of the great inventions, which at that time revolutionised industry, were those of her own citizens, had been industrialised much sooner than any other state. It was this that made a Free Trade policy both possible and necessary.

During the Napoleonic wars Britain had virtually captured the world's trade. Her greater wealth, better machinery, greater experience, and the foothold she had obtained in every market, gave her an immense advantage over her neighbours, and made it possible for her to profit to the full by Free trade. ~~on one side only~~ She could flood [✓] their markets with better, cheaper goods, in spite of their tariffs. For this reason it was that the government had the full support of the manufacturers in introducing Free Trade.

The change was necessary, because, with the advent of industrialism, and the creation of an immense town population depend-

dependant on industry, the country had ceased to be self-supporting, and had to import a steadily increasing quantity of food. Each European state, as the process of industrialisation became general, found itself in the same position. With Britain the change came earlier, and was the more complete, because she found in ^xPeel a statesman resolute and capable enough ^vto carry out such a revolutionary change; because the great manufacturers ~~saw it~~ ~~was their interest~~ that the labourer should be cheaply fed; and because she had in Cobden and Bright agitators able to win over a large body of public opinion. From 1832 to 1867 the manufacturers were the most influential class in politics, and their wishes were carried out. In Germany, where the great land-owners had the chief power, such a change was found to be impossible.

The experiment was at first a complete success. No great ~~war~~ occurred to ^xbring home ^vthe danger of living largely on foreign supplies, and outside competition in agriculture did not become acute for some ~~thirty~~ years.

The true-blue Free-Trader in any case would rather have seen his country languishing under Free Trade than flourishing under protection. ~~In those days the individualist would seriously contend that the English factory-hand was happier than the Peruvian peasant in the Golden Age of the Incas, and~~

that the Peruvian was living in a condition of mental and moral
 stagnation while the Englishman (who worked a minimum of twelve
 hours a day from the time he was ten years old) was quite free
 from this danger because he was not fed by the state. The Liberal
 would contend that the Englishman was "free" because he had a
 parliamentary vote. Similarly the Free Trader) If shown a con-
 tinental state building up industries and protecting agricult-
 ure behind a tariff wall, ^{he} would solemnly aver that this prosper-
 ity was ^{as} (as unnatural and) unreal as a consumptive's appetite; and
 if shown an industry languishing and dying under pressure of com-
 petition from abroad, would congratulate himself because ~~because~~
 the commodity in question could now be imported at a smaller
 price, and therefore this was ^{the} "natural" course of trade.
 This made him perfectly happy. The ^{other} foreign state went on pros-
 pering; saw its state-subsidised goods undercutting others in
 foreign markets; looked at its busy factories and swelling vol-
 ume of trade; and heard undisturbed that all this was without
 any solid basis. It had the facts, and the British Free Trader t

the theory: both were satisfied, like Jack and the farmer when the cow was bartered for five coloured beans.

which "Our present system of one-sided Free Trade," said Chamberlain, speaking in the momentary revival between two periods of trade depression, "is absolutely the very best that can be devised with regard to British interests and the interests of British trade."

The Free Trade theory passed through four stages. It was the work of the scientist, the practical man, the idealist, and the fanatic: Adam Smith, Peel, Cobden, and Bright.

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(1) Liberal
Speech of 24 March, 1882.

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626

^{The first}
Bright. Adam Smith had looked upon the question as an interesting problem which he worked out with scientific interest. Peel adopted the principle because he saw before him desperate suffering which must be instantly relieved. ^{or without stopping to think he carried it out.} Cobden looked at it primarily from a moral point of view, saw in it the means of securing international peace by the tightening of international bonds, and preached it like a gospel, but with the wide toleration of the earliest apostles. Bright saw it not as a condition to morality, but as in itself moral. ^{not as means to an end but as an end in itself.} He and his followers felt a departure from Free Trade principles as a real and positive crime, ^{and} raised the dictum "Buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest" into an eleventh commandment.

The attitude of Bright was the one which obtained the greatest hold upon British opinion. It was the one that was adopted by the Liberal Party and by the man in the street. In a more primitive state of society, a temple would have been consecrated to Free Trade at the entrance of the Stock Exchange, and the President of the Board of Trade, robed in cotton and crowned with wheat, would yearly have sacrificed some too aggressive Tariff Reformer upon its altars. In modern times the feeling, though quite as strong, found expression only in the less poetical form of letters to the newspapers and political meetings.

9.

145 ✓ 627 664.
The Victorian idealists looked forward with confidence to the spread of Free Trade ideas on the continent. They had no doubt that the example of Britain and its shining success would be appreciated, and that state after state would throw open its ports and markets. ~~Of Germany especially they had high hopes, the establishment of the Zollverein and the opinions of the Liberal leaders both seeming to point in that direction. It was however in France that the first notable advance was made.~~

The first success was
The signing of the Franco-British commercial treaty in 1860. ~~has been described already.~~ The motive on the French side---apart from the influence exerted by Chevalier---was political. Indeed, ~~little~~ ^{10.} commercial inducement ~~was~~ offered. Britain was about to take the final step to complete free trade, and to abolish the last of her protective duties, retaining only those needed for revenue. The reductions made on French imports would therefore be made on all imports of the same kind, ^{2.)} and they would be made whether France made reductions on her side or not. The anxiety of the Emperor to show his friendly disposition towards Britain, and the influence of Chevalier and other French free traders, carried the treaty in spite of opposition from French manufacturers. ~~(This treaty, and others which followed it, were strenuously opposed by Free Trade enthusiasts less broadminded than Cobden---not because Britain gave any preference to French goods, for as has been seen she did not, but apparently because to accept concessions for British goods from a state still protectionist stained the purity of their commercial integrity.)~~

The attachment to Napoleon III displayed by succeeding ministers in London was due to a belief that the French Free Trade régime, incomplete as it was, depended upon his goodwill, and that if ^{11.} some particular advantage was for a time obtained by France in the case of wines of certain kinds.

he were removed there would be a reversion to protection. The general tendency of opinion in France was towards protection: it was believed that British competition was damaging French industries, and it was also known that Britain would not retaliate if the treaty were denounced. The events of 1870-71 showed that British friendship was not of much practical value, and accordingly one of the first actions of Thiers was to denounce the treaty and declare for high protection. Most of his plans, however, were abandoned by his successors, and the treaty was revived. Even the new tariff of 1881^x was comparatively moderate, but the protectionist movement grew stronger, and finally in 1892 France adopted a tariff that made her one of the most protected states in the world. 12

In Germany, tendencies towards a more liberal trade policy showed themselves at the opening of the century, and first in Prussia. It was an innovation on her traditional policy. The old kings, especially Frederick II, had laid the foundations of the national

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industries by careful protection. In the general disorganisation after Jena, Stein and Hardenberg saw that liberty of growth was now a greater necessity than careful nursing. The general reduction¹³ of duties ~~that~~ took place was but a part of their system of reform, and one of ~~many~~ concessions to individual liberty.

This event was soon followed by the birth of the Zollverein, which began with an arrangement of some petty states with Prussia, was gradually extended, and was firmly established by the inclusion of Bavaria and Württemberg in 1833. It was attended with complete success, and was an important influence in favour of German unity. Under the Zollverein trade policy was at first liberal, but from 1840 onwards a tendency towards a reversion to high protection¹⁴ began to show^{*} itself. This was checked by the adoption of Free Trade in Britain, and again the tide set towards freedom. The commercial treaty with France, 1862, gave a further impetus in this direction. Bismarck found the treaty ready when he came into office, and, as he later said, he gave "his economic conscience" into the keeping of Delbrück, the Liberal and Free Trade leader, ~~(who was his colleague, and)~~ to whom he abandoned commercial affairs. In the years of the struggle for unity and power, Bismarck had no time to examine such matters himself. After Germany was securely established, however, he began¹⁵ to consider them. In 1875, under the direction of Delbrück, Camphausen, and von der Heydt, Germany adopted a plan for complete Free Trade, which was to take effect in 1877. In 1879, under the direction of Bismarck, Germany abandoned Free Trade, and reverted to protection. He threw over his Liberal colleagues without scruple, for he no longer needed their support in the country.

~~The large French indemnity, paid with such rapidity, had~~

~~given an unnatural stimulus to German industry, which was follow-~~
~~ed by a collapse. Inexperience and mismanagement contributed to~~
~~There was at this time~~
 a general depression of trade, and the steel and iron trades
 appeared to be suffering from foreign competition. Besides this
 reason for action, Bismarck ^{was} convinced ~~himself~~ that, in the face
 of keen British competition, industries could ^xonly ^{be} firmly ¹⁶
 and quickly established by the aid of protection. He heartily
 believed that Germany should be a self-supporting country, and
 he thought it particularly necessary to protect agriculture, and
 secure the food-supply of the nation. ~~Revenue requirements may~~
~~have played a part in his decision, and~~ ^{He} was also anxious to
^{please} conciliate the Junkers, the great landowners, with whom he was
 now seeking a reconciliation. Under his guidance, therefore,
 Germany reverted to protection, though she did not adopt a
 tariff as high as that of France, still less those of Russia and
 the United States.

The expectations of the British Free Traders were ¹⁷complete-
 ly disappointed, ^{for} ^xOnly one or two small states, such as Denmark,
 clung to a liberal trade policy. Britain was awkwardly placed.
 She could not retaliate against the denunciation of commercial
 treaties, or the **imposition of duties** intended to hamper British
 industries, because she had lost her bargaining power. The reim-
 position of duties was much more difficult than their automatic
 revival through the lapse of a treaty, and Free Trade opinion
 would never have permitted such retaliation, however mild.

The high hopes of Cobden and his followers as to the great-
 er security of international peace, founded on the growing

19 interdependence of nations, were ^xequally disappointed. (A more 18
~~material consideration was the effect on British trade of the~~
~~protective policy of the continental powers.)~~

As far as agriculture was concerned, the three great in-
dustrial states were in much the same position. Each had a grow-
ing industrial population which it could not feed. Britain was
more industrialised than either France or Germany: for her to
retrace her steps was impossible. Protection for agriculture,
except in the very mildest form, would mean something like
starvation. For her neighbours it was not yet too late. With
neither had industrialisation gone so far, nor agriculture
fallen so low. In Germany, the great land-owners enforced agric-
ultural protection in their own interests, steadily intensifying 19
it. The result ^xwas suffering for the working-man owing to high
prices, but it was not starvation, and was compensated by the
care of the government, which instituted a system of state in-
surance for sickness, accident and old age; and by the greater
steadiness of employment and smaller fluctuations of wages
due to industrial protection. In France the problem was yet
more easily solved. France was less industrialised than Germany;
her people clung to the land, and were slow to exchange agric-
ulture for factory life; her population was practically station-
ary. She did not require to introduce agricultural protection
till 1890, and so ^xlarge a number of her people were small pro- 20
priators that the measure had less the aspect of class legis-
lation. The nature of her soil enabled her to keep a large
proportion of her people ⁿon the land, and though she continued

to import food, the quantity did not relatively increase.

In industry the case was different. In many cases the protective tariffs were deliberately directed against Great Britain. The new continental system had two objects: it was to protect native industries against British competition at home, and to enable the protected state to supplant British goods in²¹ foreign markets, or even, in the end, in British markets.

France was not a dangerous rival. Mrs Knowles has pointed out that 19th century talk of French commercial competition is but "half-hearted." There was no real rivalry, for France was too far behind.³⁾ Besides this, the two countries worked on different planes.⁴⁾ Not only did the French people show much less disposition to take up an industrial life, but their genius led them to specialise in branches of industry where taste and skill were required, rather than in the wholesale production which had been developed in Britain. Secondly, the industrialisation of²² France received a severe set-back by the war of 1870-1. Even without this, however, French rivalry could never have been acutely dangerous, because France laboured under geographical disadvantages which could not be surmounted.

Industry at this time depended almost completely upon coal,

3) Knowles, p. 147.

4) "The economic development of France has been more continuous than that of any other great country except England, and yet it has diverged from that of England more widely than has that of any other, which bears equally high marks of constructive genius." (Marshall, p. 107.)

and French coal was expensive and difficult to work, not always of good quality, and not conveniently placed for ~~the~~ chief iron fields and industrial centres. Her railway system was not yet complete, and the transport of heavy goods was difficult. Worse still, there was no good cokable coal, and this specially hampered the iron industry. France had to import foreign coal for her manufactures to the amount of nearly half her total needs. ~~Coke she imported from Germany, and paid a high price for it.~~ The remainder of her coal was imported from Britain chiefly, but ~~This~~ was inconvenient, for the places which required this imported coal were not often accessible by sea. France produced large quantities of iron ore, but most of it was exported to be worked up in Germany, as she could not work it cheaply herself.

Notwithstanding these disadvantages, great progress had been made in the textile and metallurgical industries, and especially in the manufacture of steel, where France in 1869¹ was second only² to Britain. But the war gave an irreparable blow to all these industries, save iron-mining. The great steel-works, the textile-mills, the only important machine-manufacturies, and a large part of the most valuable iron and coal fields, were lost with Alsace-Lorraine. ²⁴

Ship-building had never recovered from the great war, and in steam-ship building France was specially backward: her ports were not well situated for her coal and iron fields. In the silk trade she held the first place, but did not compete directly with Britain, where high-quality fabrics were little made. Fine French worsteds competed more directly with British goods, but it was only in the sugar trade that French rivalry seriously damaged British industry. ²⁵

The process of industrialisation was much more rapid in Germany, once that country really began to develop her resources. There, geographical conditions were peculiarly favourable. Germany possessed coalfields greater and richer than those of Britain, including large supplies of the less valuable but cheaply worked lignite. In 1871 the coal output of Germany was 37,900,000 tons (including lignite), and that of Britain was

⁵) It is difficult to tell how much of the German desire to acquire the provinces was due to economic motives. The potash deposits of Alsace were then unknown, and the full extent of the iron-fields was not yet discovered, but enough was known to make both provinces very desirable possessions.

⁶) In 1890 France built only to the amount of 944,000 tons, while British yards built to the amount of 8,000,000. Clapham, p. 2435.

118,000,000 tons. By 1913 the output of Germany had risen to 280,000,000 tons (including lignite), while that of Britain had only risen to 292,000,000 tons. Germany continued to buy some coal from Britain for the use of her northern seaboard districts, but she began to export largely, and her merchants made a deliberate attempt to undersell British coal. 26.

An equally remarkable advance was met in the iron trade. By the end of the century Germany equalled Britain's steel output, and in the next ten years she far outstripped it. In 1860 Germany had produced only 529,000 tons of pig-iron, while Britain produced 3,800,000 tons. By 1910 the German output was 14,794,000 tons, and that of Britain only 10,172,000 tons, while Germany produced 13,149,000 tons of steel, against Britain's 7,613,000 tons. Germany was not a serious rival in the cotton trade, but woollen goods came next to iron, machinery, and coal in her export lists. In the silk trade she was second only to France, in the sugar trade she was one of the first producing powers. She was first in the world in the new chemical trades, and in the electrical industries was second only to the United States. In 1870 her total mercantile tonnage had been less than one-sixth of Britain's, but by 1912 it had risen to more than a quarter of the British total. German steam-ship companies had their ships upon all the great ocean routes, and between 1874 and 1913 Germany's share of the world's mercantile marine rose from 5.2% to more than 10%. 27.

Before 1870 Britain had held the lead in almost all impor-

7) Clapham, p. 281.

8) Clapham, p. 285.

9) Dawson, p. 59.

industries

important, and almost monopolised the carrying trade of the world. In less than fifty years, up to the outbreak of war in 1914, she lost the leadership in nearly all branches of trade and industry. In coal she still held the lead, but Germany was pressing her close. In iron, Germany was ahead of her. In steel, both Germany and the United States had left her far behind. In the woollen trade Germany was the most dangerous rival, and in cotton the United States, while India was rapidly gaining ground. In machinery Germany and the United States were again her rivals, and in the new chemical and electrical industries Britain had never had the lead. She depended entirely upon Germany for her supplies of aniline dyes, and for some important classes of machinery, too, she was coming to depend largely on foreign imports. Only in ship-building had she still an overwhelming superiority, and even here Germany was a respectable second, in mercantile tonnage, while as far as ships of war were concerned, the two powers were rapidly coming to be equal.

The volume of Britain's foreign trade showed a great positive increase, but relatively to other countries she had lost ground. Not only was the rate of increase in British trade less than it had been, but there were unpleasant symptoms. The import lists showed a larger increase in fully and partly manufactured goods than in raw materials, while the amount of imported food grew steadily. The exports showed a fall in partly manufactured articles, and a rise in raw materials, including coal.

¹⁰⁾ This tendency was already notable. The statistics of the export trade for 1865-69, and for 1880-84, showed an increase for the latter years of 8.21% in manufactured goods, but in increase of 102.46% in raw materials and instruments of industry. It is true that 1884 was a year of trade depression, but the tendency continued to be present after the depression had passed. (Report of the Commission on the Depression of Trade and Industry 1886.)

It was clear that the Free Trade policy that was to make Britain "the workshop of the world" had failed. Other countries, as well or better equipped, demanded their share of the world's work. Britain was still very prosperous, but if the advance of Germany and of the United States continued for a little longer at the same rate, her position would be less satisfactory.

33 She was now dependent for four-fifths of her wheat supply, the greater part of her supply of other ~~(classes of)~~ food-stuffs, and almost all the raw materials of her industries, save coal and iron, upon imports from without. When taken in conjunction with this, the danger that she might lose her position in industry was one that threatened the very life of the nation. How could she pay for the import of food and raw material save by the export of manufactures?

34 It was of course inevitable that she should ultimately lose her exclusive ~~control of~~ commerce. Accidental circumstances had favoured her industrial development and had given her a start by which she had far outstripped her neighbours. Except as to shipping, however, ~~several other countries~~ had greater natural advantages than herself. ~~These countries could profit by the experience of Britain as a pioneer, and avoid the mistakes and losses with which she had met in her first experiments.~~ It was impossible that Britain could long continue to hold a monopoly of the world's trade and industry, and that her wealth should continue indefinitely to increase at the same rate. Other states must sooner or later demand and obtain some share in the world's work, and the ideal of the Victorian Free-Traders had never been capable of realisation.

From any but an exclusively selfish point of view, the

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transfer of trade abroad was desirable, so long as it tended to localise industries in the places naturally suitable, where production was easiest and cheapest: but it was also desirable that the transfer should be due to natural causes only, and that artificial influences should not interfere, ~~making the process too rapid, or even~~ ^{perhaps} destroying or damaging the established sources of supply where they deserved to survive.

If Britain was to find herself only one of many great industrial states, it would be well that she should not depend too completely upon industry, and above all that she should not allow other national interests to be sacrificed to industry. She must not allow herself to reach such a state that any permanent diminution of her share in the world's trade should involve irreparable damage to the national well-being.

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It does not appear that ~~The statesmen of the mid-Victorian period had any foreboding of~~ the inevitable future. They gave most of their attention to the commercial interests of the country, but all their action seems to have been based on the idea that the country could and must maintain her exclusive position.

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With regard to food-supplies, the situation was becoming extraordinary. Between 1873 and 1883 the total foreign trade of the country rose by the value of £235,000,000. Of this £141,000,000 consisted of imports, and £94,000,000 of exports, and of these imports, meat, butter, cheese, corn, and sugar made up £57,000,000. In the same period the total acreage under crop in the United Kingdom decreased to the value of £13,000,000; the animals bred for food decreased to the value of £3,257,750; and

the value of the ground actually cropped or in grass fell to the extent of £31,651,000: the total loss to agriculture amounting to £48,181,000. Between 1871 and 1881 there was a great increase of population, but there was a fall of 10% in the number of farmers and agricultural labourers. In 1851[✓] the percentage of the whole population of England and Wales supported by agriculture had been 23.8. In 1881 it had fallen to 13.2%¹⁰. ~~An almost equal diminution had taken place in Scotland, and a smaller one in Ireland.~~ 37

148 To the mind of the ordinary person it appears strange that any country that has to import large quantities of foreign food should find the amount of home-grown food become steadily less and less. Was it then inevitable that the industrialisation of Britain should be carried to this extent, and should proceed on precisely these lines?

The consideration of economic conditions would take us far back into the previous century, and ~~and~~^{is} too complicated to be treated in detail in this brief sketch. It must only be pointed out that the industrialisation of Britain had from the first been associated with unnecessary evils. Selfish class legislation, ignorance, materialism sometimes amounting to gross brutality and greed, and above all a blind and rigid application of the 38

11.) Report of the Commission of 1886.

~~and rigid application of the~~ principle of laissez faire, had produced a state of disorganisation and suffering of which the effects were still felt. It was this that made the policy of Free Trade the only possible one. The industrial worker must have cheaper food, if a catastrophe were to be avoided. The introduction of Free Trade, and the great benefits that resulted, saved the country from the danger of social revolution, for the time at least. ~~It~~ did not remove the evils already present, but ameliorated them. Britain, the first country to ~~pass~~ through the Industrial Revolution, had neither example nor experience to guide her. Blind chance ruled the process, and from the turmoil gradually emerged the principle of Free Trade, regarded, not without reason, as the salvation of the country. There was, therefore, an extreme aversion to letting the government tamper with any of the processes of production or exchange, or attempt to control their direction.

~~The history of the Industrial Revolution itself, and its immediate results, is outside the scope of this essay.~~ By 1860 conditions had greatly improved, but the results of earlier mismanagement were still present, and the influence of Laissez Faire was still so strong that no attempt was made to penetrate the confusion. Two influences, throughout the Victorian period, were at work to regulate and improve the position of the labourer---on the one side that of Trade Unionism, on the other the protective legislation introduced by a small but growing body of humanitarian opinion: but this was the work of the physician, when what was urgently called for was the investigation of the scientist. It aimed merely at removing incidental evils, and did not analyse the system as a whole. That this neglect did not bring immediate retribution was

owing to the ^{effects} benefits of Free Trade in ~~lowering~~ prices and raising wages. What paternal legislation did in Germany, Free Trade did in Britain. It made the position of the worker bearable, and saved the country, for the time, from anarchic influences. It was small wonder that the government felt it to be the most important element in their system. ^{12x} It was, however, only a temporary expedient. It palliated the evils of industrialism without removing them, and when, as competition arose, Britain was ousted from her position of unquestioned supremacy, the problems that had been shelved emerged again in a new form.

Since it was considered better to meet the dangers of industrialism by the import of cheap foreign food rather than by trying to regulate its processes, was all done that could be to lessen the dangers which attended the remedy?

Britain might be involved in war, and the enemy might intercept her food supplies. She might arouse the hostility of the power from which she bought supplies, which would then possibly be stopped. A third danger was that the supplying power might cease to produce (as happened in the case of Russian corn in the next century.) Lastly, Britain might no longer be able to pay for the imports required.

The first danger could only be countered by maintaining a navy sufficiently powerful to protect British commerce at sea against any possible enemy: The second, by buying food from countries which were not likely to become the enemies of Britain.

12.) "The main reason why I do not join myself with the Protectionists is that I believe low prices in the necessities of life and political stability in a democratic constitution are practically inseparable, and that high prices in the necessities of life and political instability in a democratic constitution are also practically inseparable." Lord Randolph Churchill in 1887. Churchill p. 692.

upon Free Trade as a complete success. Few were found to endorse Arnold's opinion that "the untaxing of the poor man's bread has...been used, not so much[✓] to make the existing poor man's bread cheaper or more abundant, but rather to create more poor men to eat it.¹³⁾" The great prosperity of the country, in reality due to a variety of causes, was attributed entirely to Free Trade. Children at school were taught that foreign peoples wore wooden shoes and ate black bread because they did not have Free Trade, and, seizing the idea with the tenacity of infancy, grew up to form another generation of Free-Traders.

¹⁴⁹ The gradual but perceptible increase of foreign competition and the periodic depressions of trade which began to occur led to the appearance of a few critics, and to a divergence between the two political parties. The Liberals saw the value of Free Trade as a party cry, and held to it ever more enthusiastically. The Conservatives, who first associated themselves with the new spirit of imperialism, were less averse to the idea of imperial preference.

The Commercial Treaty with France in 1860 had first showed that differences of opinion might exist. The treaty and the system which it inaugurated were denounced by the extreme Free Traders. They could not deny that the treaty made trade with France more free, but it was an infringement of their principles to make any agreement that regulated trade, and the extremists would rather have seen France prohibit the entrance of British goods than sully the purity of their commercial system by ob-

13) "Culture and Anarchy."

obtaining new markets through a treaty with a protected state. As the treaty committed Britain to nothing except not to reintroduce protection against France for a certain number of years, and as France obtained only an infinitesimal and temporary advantage over other states in British markets, it would be hard to find a more rigid adherence to principle.

A series of treaties[✓] with other states followed. Britain had[✓] now little to offer in return for concessions, but she succeeded in obtaining very fair terms, chiefly because her Free Trade system was new, and foreign states wished to secure their position in case she should return to protection. The **result** was the establishment of something approaching a Free Trade régime all over Europe, through a "network" of commercial treaties, each including a "Most Favoured Nation" clause.

After Cobden's death, however, the narrower view began to obtain the ascendancy. Gladstone inclined to the Manchester school, and could sympathise with such men as Bonamy Price,[✓] who considered even the limitation of[✓] the hours of labour an infringement of the principle of Free Trade not compensated for by the resulting improvement of the health of the nation. Thus no further treaties were concluded, and several times small duties were abolished without any attempt being made to utilise this to obtain better terms from foreign states, though in several cases this could have been done with success.

¹⁴) It "taxed the community with dearer goods in order to confer special advantages on the working-man." Report of the Commission of 1886.

¹⁵) See Fuchs, Pt. I, Chap. I.

Review

52 The effect of this policy was seen when the time came for
 the treaties to be renewed. It was now seen that Britain was
 not likely ever to revert to protection. The treaties were all 51
 renewed on much less favourable terms, and the effect on British
 trade was immediately felt. The case of France was of special
 interest. Britain wished to conclude a simple "Most Favoured
 Nation" treaty, but France would **only** concede this if Britain
 bound herself not to alter her own tariff while the treaty last-
 ed. The government refused to bind themselves to this, and the
 negotiations therefore broke down. As France did not wish to
 discriminate against British goods, she resorted to the exped-
 ient of introducing a special law giving them "Most Favoured
 Nation" treatment, and the position of British trade with France 50
 thus came to depend entirely upon the goodwill of the French
 53 government, because Britain refused to guarantee France against
 a reversion to protection while the treaty lasted.

The result was a nasty shock to British self-satisfaction,
 and the government used all that was left of their bargaining-
 power---the final rectification of the wine duties---to conclude
 treaties with Spain, Portugal, and Greece. ~~Sad experience had~~
~~at last begun to penetrate the hard shell of "Manchesterism."~~

54 British trade suffered not only from the resumption of high
 protection by the continental states, but from ^{the} unfair competition
 of bounty-fed goods. The case of the sugar bounties is not only 53
 typical, but is so much the most important that it will be suff-
 icient for discussion here.

The British sugar supply had originally been drawn chiefly

from the canefields of the West Indies. Most of the European states had now taken up beet-sugar production on a large scale, and a system of drawbacks on export was in use, which acted as a bounty, enabled beet sugar to undercut cane sugar in **British** markets, and seriously affected the British sugar-refining industry.

France, Holland, and Belgium were willing to ~~do for~~ away with ~~the~~ the bounty,^N but **only if** Britain, on her side, would engage to place a countervailing duty on bounty-fed sugar coming from countries which refused to sign the proposed convention. This was in order that their imports might not be placed at a disadvantage if Germany and Austria refused to sign. Britain refused these terms, and again her bargaining power was gratuitously thrown away by the abolition of the last of the sugar duties without reference to the negotiations.

At this time a commission of inquiry had just reported that the loaf-sugar refining industry was practically dead, though moist-sugar refining had flourished under low prices: production in the West Indies was virtually at a standstill, and cane sugar could not be produced at the price maintained by bounty-fed beet sugar. Cane sugar was then selling at $\frac{3}{4}$ d the pound, so that a duty of $\frac{1}{4}$ d the pound, or $2/6$ the hundredweight, would have been sufficient to give cane sugar an equal chance in a fair and open market.

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[When, moved by the depression of trade in the early Eighties, the government did at last consent to a treaty which involved the abolition of the bounties and the prohibition of

the import of sugar coming from countries which refused to sign the agreement, the Free Traders were at once up in arms, and prevented the arrangement from being carried out. They declared that it would involve a heavy loss to the jam, biscuit, and confectionery trades, which had thriven on cheap sugar.^{16.)}

The West Indian planters were abandoned, and were only saved from complete ruin by the opening of a new market for cane sugar in Canada.

For Bright and those like-minded, Free Trade was at bottom nothing more or less than the business maxim, Buy cheap and sell dear. Because sugar, at the moment, was cheaper under the bounty system, they refused to take any steps to end that system. Yet this attitude was much more contrary to the true doctrine of Free Trade than that of the Fair-Trader who wished to do away with the bounties by means of a countervailing duty. Artificial low prices are as dangerous to production as artificial high prices. The essence of Free Trade is that the natural

^{16.)} The Representatives of these industries, however, did not all share this view.

sources of production should have free play, and that artificial restrictions and artificial stimuli alike should be removed. The sugar-bounty system involved the destruction of⁵⁸ the natural sources of ~~production~~ in the West Indies, and the forcing down of prices to an unnaturally low level. The low prices this introduced could not be as secure as if they had been arrived at in the natural course of development. Should any accident interrupt the production of beet sugar, the destruction of the cane sugar supply would be instantly and painfully felt. In the same way the prosperity of the ^{British} confectionery industries was insecure in so far as it rested upon low sugar prices due to artificial causes. The Free Traders sacrificed the spirit of Free Trade in a slavish adherence to the letter of the law. It mattered not that the bounties were paid by foreign states; the effect was exactly the same as if Bright himself had introduced a law giving high protection to the jam trade.

In their rigid ^{adherence to} ~~application of~~ Laissez Faire the government neglected to take any steps to encourage the application of new scientific knowledge to industry, as was done in Germany. In Britain the facilities for a general scientific education were much less, and no attempt was made by the state to bring science into close relations⁵⁹ with production and exchange. This was an advantage which Britain could certainly not afford to ~~lose~~ in these days of ~~steadily~~/intensifying competition, but for this the public was more to blame than the government. British manufacturers ignored or despised the scientific treatment of industry, partly owing to bad education, and partly to that deep-rooted contempt and distrust of education common to the

English middle and lower classes.

In such circumstances it was small wonder that the idea of imperial preference should obtain but little hold upon the general public. Britain continued to depend upon the goodwill of the colonies for her position in their markets,⁶¹ relatively the most important to her,⁽¹⁷⁾ and the question of securing the food supply was left^V in abeyance.

Enough has been said to show that Britain's losses in trade and industry were not entirely due to natural and inevitable causes. A more unprejudiced and far-sighted attitude on the part of both government and people could have, at least slightly, delayed and avoided them. Here also misfortune was partly due to the influence of pre-conceived ideas, to blind self-satisfaction, to contempt of foreigners, and to ^{an} ~~the~~ ignorant and narrow subservience to theories only^N superficially understood. 62.

our connection, while it lasts, will be as profitable to both parties, and our separation, if it comes, as disastrous as possible."

Disraeli in his early days shared this opinion. "It can never be our province, or our policy," he said, "to allow the Canadian frontier against U.S. ... Canada to be a barrier to defend themselves; recall the African proverb; give up the battle."

17.) The colonial trade formed a not very large percentage in the total British foreign trade, but it was rapidly growing, and in proportion to their population the colonies were, with a few exceptions, her best customers. ~~in proportion to their population the colonies were, with a few exceptions, her best customers.~~

II.

In 1860 it was the general belief that the colonies would inevitably drift away from the mother country and be lost as the American colonies had been lost; only, it was hoped, without any ill-feeling being aroused. This time there would be no opposition or grief at home. Free Trade, in the current view, did away with the necessity for colonies. It would soon be universal, and in this case all the present commercial advantages would accrue to Britain, without the expenses for which she was now liable.

"I had always believed," wrote Lord Blachford,⁶³ who for many years was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, "---and the belief so confirmed and consolidated itself that I can hardly realise the possibility of anyone seriously thinking the contrary---that the destiny of our colonies is independence; and that...the function of the Colonial Office is to secure that our connection, while it lasts, shall be as profitable to both parties, and our separation, when it comes, as amicable, as possible."¹³

Disraeli in his early days shared this opinion. "It can never be our pretence, or our policy," he said, "To defend the Canadian frontier⁶⁴ against U.S....Leave the Canadians to defend themselves; recall the African squadron; give up the settlements on the West Coast of Africa; and we shall make a saving which will...enable us to build ships and have a good budget."¹⁹ This clarion call found its echo in the breast of many a patriotic

Britain of the day.

18) Quoted Egerton, p. 367-8.
19) Disraeli, IV, p. 476
Beaconsfield,

Briton of the day.

"The best solution....would probably be that in the course of time and in the most friendly spirit the Dominion (Canada) should find itself (sic) strong enough to proclaim her (sic) independence," wrote Granville to Russell in 1868. ²⁰⁾

157 "I cross-questioned two representative men on this subject," wrote Morier in 1875, "Lord Derby and the Duke of Cleveland.... Both regarded Canada as lost, and as a province we should never fire a shot for." ²¹⁾

"It seems in the nature of things that the United States' prestige should grow and that ours should wane in North America, and I wish we were well and creditably out of the scrape," wrote Lyons in 1870, and Clarendon replied, "I agree with every word you

20) Granville, II, p. 22.

21) Morier, II, p. 276.

say about our possessions in North America, and wish that they would propose to be independent, and to annex themselves. We can't⁶⁶ throw them off, and it is very desirable that we should part as friends."²²⁾

~~Colonies, it was thought, were nothing but an expense and a trouble.~~ Lord Newton reports that he heard 'a Cabinet Minister, who had been colonial secretary,' say that "colonies were expensive luxuries which only a rich country like England could afford to indulge in."²³⁾ Disraeli spoke of them as "deadweights."²⁴⁾ Gladstone, in his Midlothian campaign of 1880 used the expression, "If Cyprus and the Transvaal were as valuable as they are valueless, I would repudiate them because they are obtained by means dishonourable to the character of the country."²⁵⁾ As, however, he decided on coming into office to keep them both, perhaps the statement should not be taken at its face value.⁶⁷

~~This view of colonies as white elephants, and their ultimate loss as inevitable, did not prevent the various governments from strenuously opposing the acquisition of colonial possessions by any other nation.~~

Various causes contributed to produce a gradual change of opinion on this point. The growth of intercommunication was a necessary condition of the change. Improved methods of transport, and the invention of the telegraph, made the preservation of the British Empire possible, even as it prevented the break-up of the United States.

The growing importance of commercial relations with the colonies has already been ^{noted} described. The change of sentiment in Brit-

²²⁾ Lyons I, p. 292. ²³⁾ Ib. ²⁴⁾ Beaconsfield, IV, p. 475. ²⁵⁾ Gladstone, II, p. 28. (Hales mine)

Britain, however, was due to something more than this. It was the first sign that the Victorian spirit^v was dying out, and that the country was entering upon a new stage of development. 68.

The prophet of the new imperialism was Sir Charles Dilke, whose "Greater Britain," published in 1868, first roused public opinion to an interest and pride in the empire. Dilke was influ-

~~enced by Victorian idealism, and which he had been educated, but his mind inclined to empiricism.~~ ^{Dilke's} ^{unprejudiced} His outlook was practical and ^{unprejudiced} unconventional as compared with that of most of his contemporaries. The new imperialism which he preached found disciples everywhere and in all parties. Disraeli perceived its romantic value and changed his tune: but in spite of the fact that the Conservatives were^v the first to take up the idea as a party principle, Dilke found hearers even more enthusiastic among the Liberals, and in Chamberlain he met a mind of his own type, though not of equal originality and depth. 69.

These men were imperialists pure and simple. Their aim was to consolidate the empire, creating a strong federation of states in which England held the predominant authority and disposed of the resources of the rest to make herself the strongest power in the world, politically and commercially. They believed that the English ("The Anglo-Saxon Race," as the fashion of the day had it) had certain qualities which destined them^v to be the ruling people of the world. They were preeminently fitted to colonise the temperate regions, and to convey the benefits of civilisation to inferior races. No other people had ever shown 70.

equal gifts in these respects, or so much "aptitude for government."

9 The current of imperialist opinion, deepening and widening with great rapidity, divided into two main currents. On the one hand was the commercial imperialism of such men as Cecil Rhodes, a distinctly non-Victorian conception. It had its greatness, but it was great as Bismarck's Prussia was great: selfish, greedy, materialistic, and covering all this with a mask of humanitarian or even religious sentiment. Commercialism, under pressure of competition, was outgrowing its Manchester-made pacificism, and flowing into this new channel. It was the distinctively British manifestation of the new spirit that had spread over Europe since Bismarck first sprang to success. Its watchword was Rhodes' "Her Majesty's flag is the greatest commercial asset in the world."

10 The second type of imperialist opinion was the one generally adopted by public opinion. It was thoroughly Victorian, in its sentimentalism, its unreality, its blind confidence. It was simply a new idea added onto the stock of old ones, without consideration or understanding. Later Rosebery was its chief exponent in politics, and preached sentimental imperialism in a style as thrilling, as solemn, and as vague as that in which Gladstone, his spiritual father, had once denounced it. This sort of imperialism was almost as pernicious as the commercial variety, for it lent itself to exploitation by the latter. Its devotees were sincere, but their imperialism was as ignorant and as superficial as their one-time view of the colonies as "dead-weights." The essential artificiality of this school of

opinion may be exemplified by the fact that the United States⁷³ were commonly included when "the solidarity of the Anglo-Saxon race" was proclaimed. Rosebery expressed this view when he said, "It is difficult for some of us---it is difficult at any rate for myself---to consider the United States as a foreign power."²⁶⁾ It was unfortunate that the United States apparently did not find a parallel difficulty in thinking of Great Britain as a foreign power.

These tendencies were as yet not fully developed. Among the Liberals opinion was still divided, ~~and the result produced a policy more fluctuating, confused, and fickle than any which even that party had followed before.~~

The politicians of the old school, of whom Granville and Gladstone⁷⁴ were the chief, disliked annexation because they believed colonies were expensive and useless, though at the same time they looked with jealousy and displeasure on the colonial acquisitions of other countries. With Granville a vague, instinctive jealousy was at times strong enough ^{to outweigh his} prejudice against ^{imperialism} ~~expansion~~. With Gladstone---though he justified his attitude in public on high moral grounds---it is clear from his tone in private that, though he was perhaps not fully conscious of it, the question of expenditure was finally decisive. ²¹⁾ ~~With these, though really belonging to a younger generation, must be classed Vernon Harcourt, for his influence was generally exerted against indiscriminate annexation, and in favour of conciliation towards foreign rivals. He at times~~

²⁶⁾ Speech at Leeds, 11.10.88. ^{Oct.} ~~Speech at Leeds, 11.10.88.~~ ²⁷⁾ See his letter, Dilke, II, p. 84; correspondence on Cameroons, Bluebook 1884, etc.

~~displayed the ignorant heedlessness common to most of his col-~~
~~leagues, but his conduct was generally ruled by considerations~~
~~of justice and common sense. "We cannot be surprised," he wrote,~~
~~later, "if Great Powers are irritated at our advancing a claim~~
~~to the exclusive possession of the Pacific and its islands, to~~
~~supremacy in the Mediterranean, to the proprietorship of Africa,~~
~~and the dominion of Asia. Surely a little give and take in these~~
~~matters would be wise."~~

On the other side were the new Liberal imperialists, Dilke,
 Chamberlain, and their followers, who wished to prevent other
 powers from acquiring colonial possessions, and to establish
 something like a colonial monopoly for Britain. This had to some
 extent been done already as regarded temperate regions, but
 with the still unoccupied territories of a tropical or sub-
 tropical character, it was ^{not now} ~~no longer~~ possible. Foreign states
 could no longer tamely accept such claims ~~on another part of~~ Britain.
 After the Congress of Berlin had for the moment settled the
 internal problems of Europe, all the great continental powers,
 for one reason or another, began to turn their attention to
 colonial expansion.

In 1878 France was still the only power whose rivalry
 Britain dreaded in colonial affairs. France had already a great
 colonial empire, whose extension was particularly ~~sharply~~ ~~marked~~

~~As when he unhesitatingly voted for handing over Angra Pequena to Germany, and later remarked to Herbert Bismarck, "I don't even now know where Angra Pequena is."~~ G.F.O. IV, 749.

Harcourt to Kimberley, 8.12.94. Harcourt II, p. 325.

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obnoxious to Britain, partly owing to the ^{vague} traditional fear of French influence and power, and partly to the fact that France habitually established a system of protection in her colonies, with unhappy ~~effects~~ on British trade.

The British attitude to French colonial schemes was **curious**ly inconsistent. Every new ^{French} acquisition was received with threats and lamentations in London, but at the same time the utmost contempt was poured on France as a colonising power.

"Now comes the question," wrote Colonel Claremont in 1865, "What is to be done with a country (Algeria) which they do not know how to colonise, and the natives of which may be subdued for a time but are sure to rise again... Under Louis Philippe the basis of the government was peace in Europe, Algeria was then a safety-valve where exuberant spirits might find a field and from which military bulletins could be despatched to amuse the French people... He (Napoleon III) knows the French are wretched colonists, he has tried every sort of government for the colony... all have **equally** failed.... All are ready to admit that this magnificent conquest has been and is still likely to be a constant source to them of embarrassment and expense." ^{28.7}

Lyons spoke of the occupation of Tunis as "a cheap way of gratifying their vanity and of advancing some of their apparent interests." ^{29.}

If colonies were only a source of weakness and expense to France, it is not clear why Britain so strongly objected to her

²⁸⁾ Claremont to Cowley, 17 Jan. 1865, F.O. France, 1566.

²⁹⁾ Lyons II, p. 247.

acquiring them, nor is it clear why colonial expansion was for France a "gratification of vanity" but perfectly reasonable and justifiable in the case of Britain. Dilke wrote in 1887, "England has made no annexations except in self-defence" against the annex-³⁰⁾ationist policy of France and Germany." It will be seen that the attempt to gather the crumbs which fell from the table of these powers was attended with some success, when we learn that between 1880 and 1910 Britain acquired 4,754,000 square miles of new territory, while France acquired 3,500,000 square miles, and Germany only about 1,000,000 square miles.³¹⁾

There ~~is~~^{was} no real justification for the British view that the French were markedly inferior to the British as a colonising race. It is true that ~~for~~ⁱⁿ the colonising of temperate regions the British appear to be much better suited, and that the attitude of the French emigrant, "toujours borné par la perspective du retour du pays," does not make for success. But the districts which were at this time the subject of dispute were not as a rule suitable for European colonisation. They were commonly tropical or sub-tropical regions with a prolific native population: and in dealing with such regions the French, though in some ways inferior to the British, were in others ~~ways~~^{ways} superior.

The British government had the excuse, that they were many years ahead of France in experience, and that as yet her colonial schemes were largely experimental, and her most striking successes were yet unwon. Nevertheless France had natural advantages as great as Britain, though of a very different nature.

30.) Present position of European Politics, p. 95.

31.) Hobson, Imperialism, p. 23 ff.

If Britain was perhaps more successful in developing the economic resources of her colonies, France proved herself a more suitable custodian for the treasures of an alien civilisation and for archaeological remains. The French invariably display good taste and reverence in dealing with such, and with the natural beauties of the country. No British government, however, ever stopped to consider the preservation of natural beauties, whether at home³²⁾ or abroad. Where monetary profit may be made factories will be built, though noble landscapes be blotted, rivers polluted, and air poisoned as the result. In Egypt some of the most valuable historical remains were wantonly destroyed in the making of the Nile barrage, though the destruction could have been avoided by the expenditure of a few additional thousands of pounds. The attitude of the English to an alien civilisation, in fact, always recalls that of Galt's minister of state: "That, however, is a step in the progress of wants; having once acquired a desire for beef and rum, their (the Hindus) industry will thence be stimulated to obtain these luxuries, and a superior morality will be gradually evolved by the consequent cultivation of industry."³³⁾ The deliberate destruction of the Indian silk and cotton manufactures for the benefit of the English cotton trade, and the unintentional destruction

³²⁾ Prof. A. H. Sayce is my authority for this statement.

³³⁾ "The Last of the Lairds," Chap. 16.

of the Indian village community system by the introduction of English methods of local government, are the most striking examples of this attitude. ³⁴⁾

153. (While the British usually make the best administrators and governors of backward populations, the French have the advantage in having very much less colour-prejudice, which gives them great success in dealing with certain races. ⁸⁴

In the history of both countries as imperial powers, there are many incidents of brutality and oppression. It is improbable, that Britain can here claim any advantage over France, or that there is any incident in the development of the French colonial empire quite comparable to the massacre of the Tasmanian natives by British colonists, or to one or two incidents in the history of British India.

As far as trade policy was concerned, the case against France was much clearer. On the one hand, it seems likely that the foreign trade of the French colonies was considerably handicapped by the protective system, though in some cases it may have been an advantage to internal industries. ³⁵⁾ On the other hand, the protective duties certainly acted as a hindrance to British trade in some cases at least. ⁸⁵

The damage done, however, was not very great. In 1907, for example, Britain took 45% of the total trade of French Guinea;

34) Birdwood, For the cotton trade see Birdwood, II p. 75 ff. & Romesh Dutt p. 256 ff.
Romesh Dutt, For village communities, Romesh Dutt Chaps. VIII

35) The boot-and-shoe trade of Constantine, for example, would probably not have reached its present eminence so quickly under a Free Trade regime.

the chief import of this province and of Senegal (cotton goods) came almost entirely from Britain; the exports of Senegal do not come to Britain, but four-fifths of them are ground-nuts, which are not used in Britain; the provinces of Tunis and Algeria would in any case trade chiefly with France, owing to their geographical position. In 1885, 50% of the imports of Tunis came from France; in 1912, after years of high protection, only 51% of the imports of Tunis were French. These figures will suffice to show that though hindered by the French protective system, British trade was not dangerously injured. Was the amount of the loss, then, sufficient to justify the intense hostility displayed by Britain to the colonial schemes of France? Was it worth while, for this trifling damage, to run the risk of raising permanent ill-feeling in the mind of a great European power, Britain's nearest neighbour?

Apparently, in the view of the government, it was worth while. They took up an attitude of nagging opposition to France, which for nearly twenty years kept the two peoples on bad terms, and which, therefore, seriously weakened Britain's own position in every crisis in international affairs.

Britain had always looked more favourably upon the acquisition of colonies by Germany than by France, partly because Germany's colonial trade policy was less selfish, and partly because they had no serious apprehension that Germany would seriously take up the idea of colonial expansion.

~~Granville wrote that he did not feel "the slightest Jeal-~~

36) Figures from the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

37)

jealousy of the Germans acquiring colonial possessions." Gladstone told Herbert Bismarck that, if Germany had not of her own accord developed colonial ambitions, he would have felt inclined to "beseech" her to do so, so great would be the benefit of her civilising influence. ³⁸⁾ Even the imperialists regarded German annexation as a lesser evil. "A German annexation...." wrote Dilke, "must for England be preferable to a French, so long as Germany does not...place differential duties upon foreign goods.it is impossible to view with much regret the nominal acquisition by Germany of these territories." ³⁹⁾ 89.

The old idea, that Germany would never become a colonial power, was strengthened by the declarations of Bismarck, who was at first sincerely opposed to colonial ventures. In 1868 he wrote to Roon that he did not believe colonies would be an advantage to Germany, and that they would be expensive and difficult to defend. After 1878 he made the same statement so frequently and so emphatically to Odo Russell, that it was evidently done intentionally to conceal the change of opinion that was going on in his mind. As late as August 1883, the British Chargé d'Affaires wrote: "It would be a mistake to suppose that the Imperial Government has any present intention of establishing Crown Colonies, or of imitating the practice adopted by France of assuming a protectorate over any territory acquired by a French traveller or explorer. The German government are opposed to any plan 90.

37) 29 Nov., 1883. Granville, II, p. 337.

38) G.F.O. IV, 760.

39) "Present Position of European Politics," p. 54.

which might hamper their foreign relations, and I believe that what Lord Ampthill stated is as true to-day as it was in 1880."

Years before this, Lord Lytton had pointed out the weakness of the safeguards on which Britain was relying.

91.

"Odo's impression....that Bismarck does not want colonies rather surprised me. It seems to me a perfectly natural and quite inevitable ambition on the part of a power so strong as Germany not to remain an inland state a moment longer than it can help, but to get to the sea and extend its seaboard in all possible directions..... But you can't be a Maritime Power without colonies... Lord Derby says that though Germany may probably cherish such an ambition, she will have as much seaboard as she can practically want as long as she retains possession of the Duchies.

92.

But that is not a very convenient commercial seaboard, and I confess I can't help doubting the absence of all desire for more and better outlets to the sea, as long as her military power and prestige remain unbroken."

The truth was that for Germany trade and colonial policy were almost as closely connected and as vitally important as for Britain. The industrialisation of the country was going on so fast that she must depend more and more upon imported food. She

1 August 1883 The Ampthill despatch referred to is evidently that printed in the West African Blue Book of 1884: "The German government feel more want of soldiers than of colonies;.....Under present circumstances, therefore, the plan for a German colony in South Africa has no prospect of success." See Duke II pp 84-5.

41) Lytton to Lyons, 27 October 1874, Lyons II p. 60.

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could conveniently feed, perhaps, forty millions. In 1875 her population was already forty-two millions, and was increasing at the rate of 80,000 to 90,000 a year. 93

31 As to imported food, Germany was in a worse position than Britain, though as yet she did not need to import such large quantities. Her ports were comparatively few, and therefore easy to blockade. The Baltic ports were not upon the open sea, and Denmark and Sweden held the shores of the Sound. Even the building, later, of the Kiel Canal, gave only partial relief. A free coast-line with good ports was the great desideratum of Germany. It was even a necessity, if she wished to continue her development on the same lines as before. How could she be confident of her own power, if the Danish fleet were sufficient to blockade her ports? 32 ~~if her food supply were to be secure~~, it must be transported in German bottoms and there must be a German navy to guard it in case of war. It has been seen that the most peace-loving of British statesmen realised this necessity; it was inevitable that Germany should draw the same conclusion. 94

But how have a navy without colonies? The big war-ships could not live in port, perambulating the Baltic for exercise like prize greyhounds on leash. There must be harbours all over the world where they could put in for fuel and repairs. 95

33 Emigration was not at the moment a pressing problem, though in the past many of Germany's most valuable subjects had been lost in this way: but there was a natural wish to secure control of some of the sources of the supplies of raw material and food-stuffs required by German industry and people.

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Both government and people were beginning to awake to these necessities. The break with the Free Traders had directed Bismarck's attention to economic matters. Until now he had been absorbed in European problems, but he had now firmly established Germany as a great power, and placed her in a position where she need fear, for some time to come, no attack. He surrounded her with a double entrenchment of alliances; he had isolated her most dangerous enemy. He now felt free, therefore, to take the next forward step, and begin to consider Germany's position as a world power, her extra-European interests. At the same time, he felt that public opinion was ripening for action. Societies began to be founded to encourage interest in overseas colonisation: mercantile companies were setting up trading stations abroad, and demanding the protection of their government: new outlets were required for German capital. In fine, as a French writer wittily remarks of Germany, "pour être puissance coloniale, il ne lui manquait que des colonies."

British statesmen at first failed to realise how seriously Germany regarded her colonial empire. Granville's patience did not stand the test of experience, and his first impulse was to oppose Germany's new schemes. Most of the territory which Germany coveted had been repeatedly rejected by the British government, and when they at last took steps to acquire it, it was because they believed France was about to step in. When Germany adroitly secured the disputed morsels, Granville entered upon a

a fretful, dog-in-the-manger, and grudging policy, which aroused Bismarck's annoyance. The Chancellor lost no time in teaching Granville that Germany was in earnest, and put an instant stop to British opposition by threatening to support France in Egypt. 43.) Thus the ungenerous attitude of Great Britain in colonial matters led her into an undignified squabble with two of the great European powers, so that she could only defend herself against the one by surrendering completely to the other. 99.

There was no justification whatever for the opposition to Germany's colonial enterprises. British trade was not threatened, as Germany kept her colonial markets open. Germany has not since then proved a successful administrator and organiser of her colonies, 44.) but Britain could not possibly foresee that. Granville's attitude was dictated by an ignorant, instinctive selfishness, and the more conciliatory policy of his colleagues and his successors was due as much to fear of Bismarck's threats as to a politic generosity.

After colonies, came the navy.

This had always been looked upon in Britain as more or less of a joke. No one seriously believed that Germany could become a

44.) None of the German colonies were self-supporting as long as they were under German rule, and there were many hideous administrative abuses.

45.) When Bismarck was asked how he would defend the new German colonies, he replied, "Against France at the gates of Metz; against England in Egypt."

great sea power. It was assumed that she would cultivate the friendship of Britain, and would rely on the assistance of the British fleet, which, indeed, was freely proffered her in the Eighties for use against France.

"Bismarck is very amusing with his baby fleet," Lord Russell had written long before. ⁴⁵

¹⁵⁵ "The Prussian government," reported Napier in 1865, "Contemplates the creation of a naval force which shall be fitted for a triple duty, to defend the coast of the Confederation, to meet and attack a hostile war fleet on the open sea, and to pursue and capture the trading vessels of her enemy in distant regions. There is a large indulgence of the fancy in this picture sketched by some enthusiastic and sedentary functionary in a Berlin bureau..... The expansion of Prussian influence.... is not inconsistent with... the Balance of Power in Europe, and it would find a legitimate and inoffensive field of action and satisfaction in the development of the Prussian navy, which will probably be the German navy..... In my humble judgment the appearance of this new power on the sea need not inspire us with any jealousy or apprehension. England has made three great wars in conjunction with Prussia, and never fought against her. The German fleet might be a useful counterpoise in the Baltic to the fleet of Russia, it would more probably appear as an ally of England than as an auxiliary of France in a general war; the development of the naval power of Prussia would be in fact an

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45) Russell to Clarendon, January 1866. Clarendon p. 305. ✓

46) Note the instinctive assumption that in a general war France and Britain must be on opposite sides.

increase of the general defensive and aggressive strength of Germany, and England has at all times desired that Germany should be united and strong. I might add the construction of ^{an} iron fleet for Germany would probably give employment and profit to English labour and english (sic) constructors." ^{47.} 103

In the upshot, however, it was not British shipyards that built the German fleet.

It is often said that Bismarck "did not want a navy," and never wished to make Germany a great sea-power. It is certainly true that in 1860 he would have looked on such a scheme as visionary: he was then a Free Trader, and did not want colonies. Nevertheless, in 1879 he introduced protection, ^{and} in the ~~Eighties~~ ^{Nineties} he acquired for Germany a great colonial empire. He was a practical man, and did not try to do two things at once, making the mistake of the greedy dog in the fable: but it is not to be believed that the greatest ~~practical~~ ^{political} genius of the age did not see that unless Germany were to change her policy and abandon her pretensions she must sooner or later strengthen her position at sea. Indeed, it is practically certain that Bismarck always had some such idea lurking at the back of his mind. It was he who planned the Kiel Canal, and he did so in 1863, when the Slesvig-¹⁰⁴ Holstein Question was maturing. He wanted the Duchies for the sake of their invaluable seaboard, and he wanted the Canal to give a German fleet swift access to the North Sea, and free communication between this and the Baltic, independent of the Sound. 105

47.) Napier to Russell, 20 April 1865, F.O. Prussia, 574.

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No sooner had he settled the most pressing European problems than he entered upon negotiations with Britain for the cession of Heligoland, necessary for the security of Kiel. He did not obtain what he wanted for twelve years, and as soon as he did so, the Canal was constructed, and the German war-fleet was first seriously undertaken.

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The development was inevitable. Bismarck's aim was to place Germany in such a position that she need not fear attack a war with any single power. Germany's military position on the continent was not secure as long as she remained so weak at sea. In 1864 Denmark had been able to blockade her ports. In 1870 the French navy had harried her shipping, and France had been able to buy munitions in Britain when this source of supply was closed to Germany. Every year, as her commerce grew, her colonial empire increased, and she had to import more food, she became more vulnerable to a possible enmity. France and Russia were her superiors at sea; France was irreconcilably hostile, Russia was suspect.

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Worst of all, however, was the danger from Britain. Britain in case of war, could destroy the trade and shipping of Germany, blockade her ports, and occupy her colonies, as easily as a giant could crush a pigmy. How was it possible that Bismarck's Germany, with her strong self-reliance and her soaring ambitions, could long endure such a position?

At present Britain was on very friendly terms with Germany, but, in Germany at least, people were beginning to realise that the interests of the two states were essentially divergent. In

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48) Fair proposals were made to Germany in 1878.

every aspect of her new ambitions, Germany came into direct competition with Britain.

We have seen how Germany, aided by the richness of her resources, the intelligence and industry of her people, and the wise superintendence of her government, successfully contested the industrial and commercial supremacy of Britain; but Britain could still deal a destructive blow at German trade by reverting to a protective policy. ⁴⁹⁾

The colonial monopoly which Britain tried to enforce interfered with German expansion. Britain occupied or claimed the most valuable districts in Asia, Africa, Australasia, and in particular her influence extended over those temperate regions round the Cape of Good Hope, which appeared to Germany particularly suitable as the outlet for a superfluous population which she would soon require. 109.

The coasts most easily accessible to Germany, opening on the ocean, were those of Holland and Belgium. Ambition and sentiment in the past had caused some French governments and a section of the French people to cast covetous eyes upon Belgium: but the possession of that country had never been for France the urgent craving that it was to become for Germany. Belgium for France " 110
was a luxury, for Germany a necessary. Yet here, above all,

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49) See Fuchs, Conclusion. ✓

Britain, the self-constituted guardian of Belgium, stood between Germany and the satisfaction of her desires, barred the way to the sea.

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[Bismarck's successors, perhaps, felt this more keenly than he did. The ~~superior~~ naval power of Britain irked them as the superior military power of France had irked their forefathers.

In the year of the cession of Heligoland, Sir Charles Dilke warned his countrymen: "The Germans mean business with their navy." ⁵⁰⁾ The opening declaration of the new Emperor, in the news ~~er that began with Bismarck's fall~~, was: "The future of Germany lies upon the sea." 6.

11,108.

Conclusion.

We have seen what high hopes were cherished in Britain of the future of United Germany. How were they fulfilled?

There were not wanting already sinister indications. In 1870 In 1870 Morier had been startled to find his old friends, the German Liberals, developing qualities which he had not known they possessed.¹⁾ The disillusionment was great; but he was too honest not to face it. "I never dreamt," he wrote, "that...the danger to civilisation would, within three years after the conclusion of peace, be directly traceable to Germany's having learnt and exaggerated the besetting vice of the people she had conquered. For there is no denying that the malady under which Europe is at present suffering is caused by German Chauvinism, a new and far more formidable type of the disease than the French, because instead of being spasmodical and undisciplined,²⁾ it is methodical, calculating, cold-blooded, and self-contained!"

For German Liberalism there was no future. That party had given whole-hearted support to Bismarck's policy in 1870, and the years that followed saw their final collapse as a living factor in German politics. In 1877, several assassination plots, chiefly formed by extreme socialists, against Bismarck and the King, aroused general indignation. The Chancellor had long

1) See his letter to Stockmar, 21 August 1870. Morier II, p. 177.
2) To Crown Prince Frederick, May 1875. Morier II, p. 346. See also p. 294.

wished for an opportunity of passing repressive laws against the socialists. Since 1866 he had relied on an alliance with the Liberals to carry on the government, but now he was sufficiently assured of his position to be able to dispense with their support, and for some years he had been tending to a reconciliation with his old friends the Conservatives. The Liberal party was sensible of the growing weakness of ^{their} ~~its~~ position. To obtain a dominating power for Germany in Europe, they had sacrificed ~~the~~ many of their principles, and the result had been a continuous loss of moral strength and independence. They now consented to pass the laws against the socialists, and it was the signal for their dissolution. The powers thus placed in the hands of the government were the negation of freedom of thought in Germany. Within one month, 135 socialist associations, 35 journals, and 100 books and pamphlets, had been suppressed. The Liberal party did not survive this exhibition of moral weakness. It split in two, one part being assimilated by the Progressists, while the majority followed Bismarck to the Right. Bennigsen retired; there was nothing else left for him to ^{do} do. The Liberals had failed far more disastrously than in 1848: then they had only shown that they lacked constructive faculty; now, that they lacked moral strength.

With the opposition so maimed, the expected development of English constitutionalism in Germany was not likely to appear. Far from progressing in the direction of responsible self-government, Germany appeared to have resigned herself to remain under the old system.

The constitution of the new German Empire was a slightly modified version of that of the late North German Confederation. The Reichstag had not been allowed to have any real say in this matter, for before the debates began Bismarck had induced the Liberal leaders to consent to his plans. The Constitution was drawn up on principles strange to English politics. The Emperor held the Presidency; his coadjutors were the Federal Council and the Reichstag. The summoning and dissolution of the Reichstag, the making of war and peace and treaties, were in his hands. His consent was not necessary, however, to (federal) legislation or taxation, which were handled by Council and Reichstag. (The Council was formed of delegates from the various states, which voted as units; Prussia held 17 votes, and so controlled the voting, as rejection by 14 votes vetoed any constitutional change. The proceedings of the Council were secret. They initiated laws, and could reject those passed by the Reichstag. The Council had also considerable executive powers.

The Reichstag, chosen by manhood suffrage, gave an illusion of democratic control. Its consent was necessary to all legislation, but its powers were really very limited. Its function was rather to assent to than to initiate legislation, its control was as imperfect as that of an assembly elected by universal suffrage must ever be, and its voting had little real effect on the government, because there was no ministerial responsibility. The Chancellor, who held a somewhat ill-defined position, was the connecting link between the three parts. He was head of the Council. He could only be appointed and dismissed by the

Emperor, and was responsible only to him. He might thus hold office for an indefinite period, and there was no such thing as party government.

157/ The constitutions of the individual states dealt with their personal affairs. Some of the southern states devised liberal and enlightened systems; but that of Prussia was as like a despotism as a constitutional state could well be, and Prussia, as we have seen, really dominated the federal government. Those who regret that in many cases constitutional rights have been obtained by revolution and the use of force, might find consolation in observing Prussia: her constitution was octroyé, the free gift of her king; and she was not allowed to forget it.

Equal disappointment awaited those who had hoped that Germany, once securely established, would become one of the pillars of European peace. Far from reducing her forces in 1871, Germany increased them. The government succeeded in keeping the military expenditure practically under its own control, and by one "temporary" arrangement after another, the peace strength of the army was added to, till in 1888 Sir Charles Dilke estimated, from the official statements of the German general staff, that in case of war Germany would be able to place 7,000,000 troops in the field.

3) Dilke, II, p. 399. The figures for the peace-time army are as follows:

	Officers.	N.C.O.s.	Soldiers.	Under Instruction.	Budget, (mill. marks)
1872.	17,213.	48,000.	401,000.	1,400,000.	450.
1881.	18,000.	"	427,000.	"	"
1890.	20,000.	60,000.	468,000.	2,400,000.	500.
1900.	23,850.	81,000.	495,000.	4,000,000.	831.
Lair, p. 101.					

By maintaining her army in such strength in time of peace, Germany forced her neighbours in self-defence to adopt a similar policy. Even Belgium began to strengthen her defences. It was the beginning of that wasteful and pernicious system of great armaments, which was to strain the resources of great powers like Britain, and almost ruin weaker powers like Italy.

Whether Germany was likely to be pacific in international affairs---whether this armament was meant only for purposes of defence---was demonstrated by the War Scare of 1875, the Schnaebelle Incident, and the other War Scare of 1887. Germany, it was seen, was ready to bully and browbeat her weaker neighbours, to use her strength to enforce unjust demands, and to make war without provocation, whenever she found it convenient, if she were not restrained by the intervention of other great powers.

At the same time she had failed to justify her earlier wars and forcible annexations by reconciling the conquered populations through a wise and sympathetic rule. Alsace and Lorraine continued to preserve their loyalty to France notwithstanding an advance in material wealth which might have served to compensate them for the change. Had the provinces been constituted a German state, a full member of the Empire, they might have been reconciled: but Bismarck and the General Staff regarded the new acquisition from a military point of view. Alsace-Lorraine was prepared as a base for a future war, and an elaborate system of fortification at once commenced. For this the provinces must be absolutely under the control of the central government, and they

were therefore constituted as an Imperial Territory (Reichsland). Later they were given 15 seats in the Reichstag, and were to be administered by a governor. One of the governors attempted a conciliatory policy, but without success, and in general a system of repression was followed, in which incidents of brutality occurred frequently enough to transform the first indignation into a steady and enduring hatred of the new "Fatherland."

13 The management of Alsace might be dictated by a fear of France attempting to recover her lost provinces; but the possession of Slesvig was perfectly secure, for Denmark was no more likely to attack Germany than a mouse would attack a tiger. Yet, in spite of persistent propaganda and several attempts at jerrymandering, North Slesvig continued to return two Danish candidates to make their ineffectual protests to the Reichstag, and indeed the number of "Danish" votes actually increased with time. 4.) 13.

4 There was one quarter where German methods in dealing with an alien population could be observed more fairly than in either Alsace or Slesvig: a province that Germany had held for a hundred years, which had no independent mother-country yearning for its recovery, and scarcely anyone who believed in the possibility of its future redemption. Would the German Empire do what Prussia had never done, and reconcile the Poles to German rule? 4.

A new Polish policy was in fact undertaken in 1871, but it

4.) See Pryor, "North Slesvig under German Rule."

was not more sympathetic: it was the most persistent and violent attack on Polish nationality that had yet been made. It was an attempt to stamp out their individuality and submerge them in a German population. ⁵⁾ "You are not a people," said Bismarck, "You have nothing behind you but your illusions and fictions." The attempt met with the success common to such systems: it degraded conquerors and conquered alike, and sowed new seeds of hatred in the breasts of the Poles.

As we have seen the economic policy of Germany developed on lines equally remote from what had been predicted in Britain. Germany had adopted a system of high protection, which in some cases was directed especially against British goods. ~~Germany had acquired a great overseas empire, which gave her~~

58) She had acquired a great overseas Empire, which gave her a contiguous land frontier with Britain in several parts of the world. In the acquisition of this empire she had displayed an

5) 1873: the Polish language was forbidden in schools. Later free private instruction in Polish was made punishable by fine or imprisonment. In 1883 religious instruction was forbidden in schools where 50% of the pupils were German. All Poles not Prussian subjects were expelled from the country. Measures were undertaken against Roman Catholics. These proceedings resulted in the school-children's strike of 1906, with its wholesale floggings of children and imprisonment of teachers. In 1886, the system of German colonisation in Polish districts was begun ---with the unfortunate result that the Germans were usually absorbed by the Poles. In 1899 Polish teachers were forbidden to speak Polish to their families. In 1904 all government officials or employees were forbidden to place their earnings in Polish banks. Etc, etc.

Germany was not called for her part in the war. She must have a continental empire, and a powerful navy.

16 insolent and aggressive spirit, and obliged Britain to refrain from opposition by threatening to attack her in other quarters. 16.

Finally, she began to plan the developement of a strong navy, which would enable her to meet Britain on equal terms on the sea.

In the light of all this, how stood the Victorian theory of Germany as the peace-loving, anti-militaristic, Liberal power, the second pillar of Free Trade, the "natural ally" whose interests could never come into conflict with those of Great Britain?

17 Germany had obtained for herself a supreme position in Europe, by setting her own material interests before all other considerations. The principle of her policy had been to destroy everything that might obstruct the course of her developement, and to seize by force whatever was desirable for her own power or security. 17.

In struggling for unity in herself and supremacy in Europe, Germany had been hindered by three states, Denmark, Austria, and France, and she had removed them successively from her path, "by blood and iron." Having established herself as the dominant power in Europe, she now wished to become the dominant power in the world, and she found herself face to face with a fourth power, more formidable than any of the others. 18

Germany was the strongest military power in Europe, and was rapidly becoming one of the greatest industrial powers. Her next necessity was an outlet for her superfluous capital and energy. She must have a commercial marine, foreign markets, colonies. 18.

As she was the strongest power on land, she must not remain the weakest power at sea. She must have a navy.

The state which in all these aspects was now Germany's rival was the world's greatest commercial, colonial, and naval power---Great Britain.

A compromise was possible: but a compromise meant the reversal of Germany's chosen policy.

That sacrifice the statesmen who guided her policy could not or would not make. As Germany had once created an army that was to destroy the military supremacy of France, so she now set to work to create a navy that was to destroy the naval supremacy of Britain.

This was essentially the continuation of the policy initiated by Bismarck thirty years before: it was only carried out less skilfully. Bismarck would never have made the mistake of alienating Britain and Russia simultaneously. His successors, full of self-confidence, did not hesitate to do so.

Germany had been too deeply influenced by the personality of Bismarck, had learned too well the lesson he taught her, to change her course even when it led her by dangerous ways. The triumph of materialism, the glory of success, had blunted her sensibilities and deadened those instincts that might have warned her. It was not so much that she overrated her own strength, as that she underrated both the material strength of her rivals, and the influence of moral considerations which she was now incapable of

understanding. Her history for the next thirty years was the inevitable outcome of her history for the last thirty years. Success, however, cannot be continually attained by repeating the same process. Only the genius of a Bismarck could have ensured to this policy a new triumph: only a complete spiritual change in the German people could have procured its abandonment.

21

21.

2124 words

2141

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Appendix.

The Ems telegram (see p 297)

Abeken to Bismarck. Ems, 13 July.

Bismarck's Condensation of the Ems Dispatch.

H.M. the King writes to me: "

"Count Benedetti caught me while I was out walking, in order to demand of me in a manner which finally became very importunate, That I should authorize him to ~~via~~ telegraph immediately that I ~~was~~ undertook never again to give my consent if the Hohenzollerns again brought forward ~~their~~ candidature. I refused him, somewhat severely at last, as one cannot and must not take such engagements à tout jamais. Of course I told ~~him~~ him that I had received no news ~~as yet~~ as yet and that as he had been informed ~~about~~ ^{from} Paris and Madrid earlier than I, he must surely perceive that my government had no more interest in the matter." Since then H.M. has received a ~~the~~ written communication from the ~~the~~ Prince. As H.M. had told Count Benedetti that he was awaiting news,

After the news of the withdrawal of the Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially communicated to the French Imperial Government by the Spanish Royal Government, the French ambassador, at Ems, further demanded of H.M. the King that he would authorize him to telegraph to Paris that H.M. the King pledged himself for the future never again to give his consent if the Hohenzollerns renewed their candidature. Hereupon H.M. declined to receive the French ambassador again, and sent him word by the aide-de-camp on duty that H.M. had nothing further to say to the ambassador.

H.M. decided, with reference
to the aforesaid demand, of
Count Eulenburg's and my proposal, not to
not to receive Count Benedetti again, but
but merely to send him word by an
aide-de-camp that H.M. had now re-
ceived from the Prince confirmation
of the news which Benedetti had
already received from Paris, and had nothing more to say
had nothing more to say to the
ambassador.

H.M. leaves it to Y. Excellency's
discretion whether Benedetti's new
demand and its refusal should be
at once communicated to our ambass-
adors, as well as to the Press.